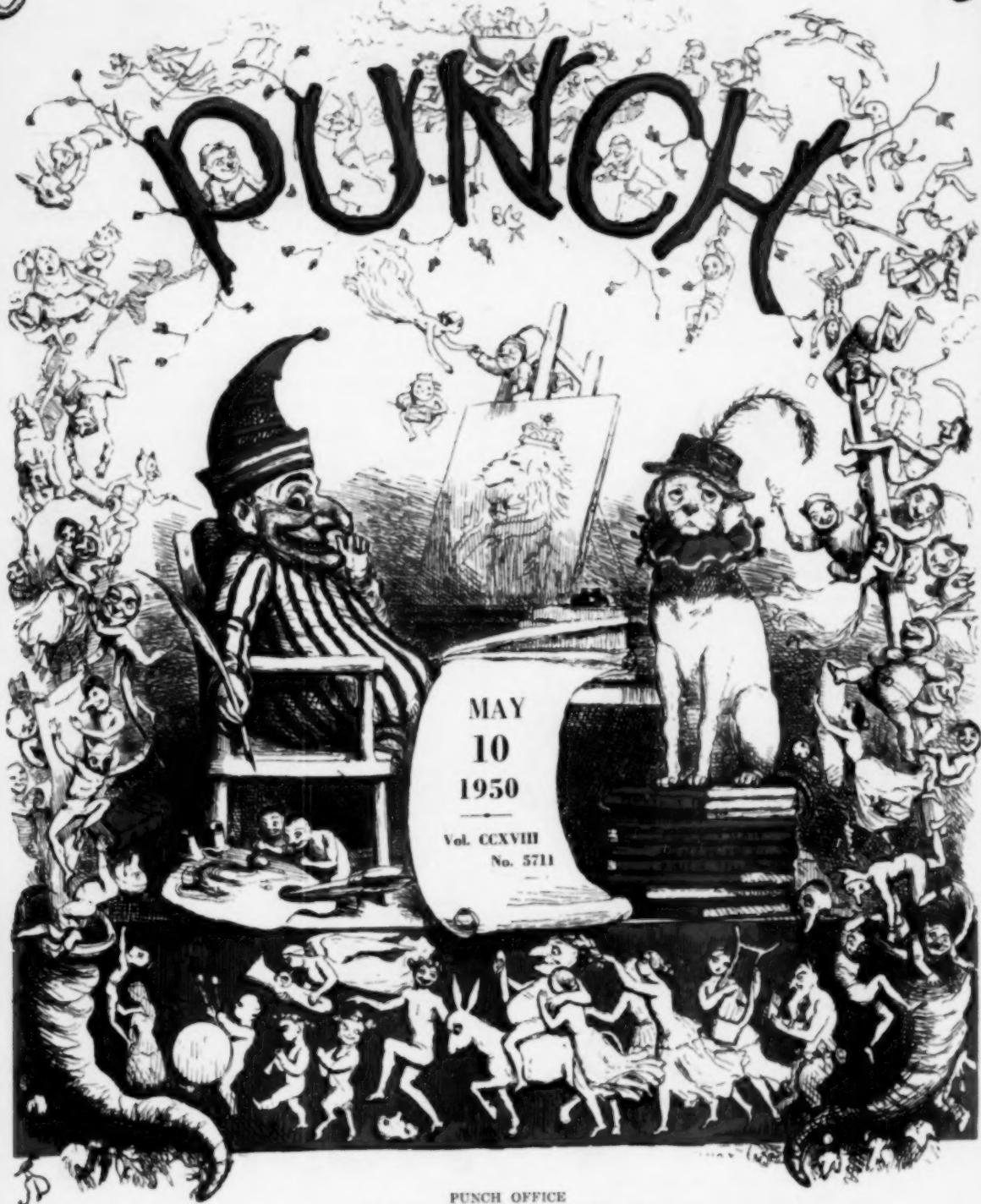


6^d

PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI—WEDNESDAY, MAY 10 1950

6^d

PUNCH OFFICE
10 BOUVERIE STREET LONDON E.C.4

Time changes

Fashion...



1825

1950

Time develops skill



Clarks make 1950 sandals
with 125 years of skill



Made by **ABDULLA** for those
who prefer the American style of blend

double
sugar in
Weetabix



PLEASES
THE ENTIRE
FAMILY!

Mother's happy because she's saving sugar every breakfast—and sugar was a real *problem* till Weetabix doubled the amount! Dad's pleased because he likes to see young

Judy (quite apart from himself!) tucking into a nourishing breakfast she really likes. And Judy's happiest of all. "Super!" she says with her mouth full. "Sweetabix, I call it!"



FREE! There are lots of other ways of serving Weetabix, too. Write to Mrs. Crisp at 231, Constantia House, Burton Latimer, Northants for a free sample of Weetabix and a copy of her recipe folder.

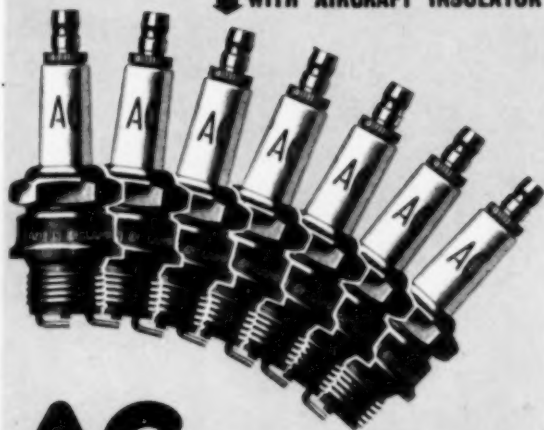
Weetabix

— more than a breakfast food.

WHEAT, MALT, EXTRA SUGAR
AND SALT—CRISPLY TOASTED



- MORE MILES PER GALLON
- QUICK, CERTAIN STARTING
- MADE BY GENERAL MOTORS
- WITH AIRCRAFT INSULATOR



AC SPARK PLUGS

AC SPARK PLUG CO. DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS LTD. GUNSTABLE, ENGLAND

Fit
for
the
gods



Wolsey

Olympian socks, by jove! Made of pure wool disciplined against shrinking by Wolsey's famous Duo-shrunk process. Every pair size-right to the last. Ask for Wolsey Cardinal socks. Wolsey underwear is also Duo-shrunk.

socks



Charming shirt-waist dress in Horrockses rayon jersey. Cool, summery print on white ground with blue, cyclamen, grey or green predominating. hip sizes 36 - 42. 11 gns.

Jersey Dresses... first floor.

Harvey Nichols of Knightsbridge

Harvey Nichols & Co. Ltd., Knightsbridge, London S.W.1

SLCane 3440



Pyjama news in poplin

This is one of a variety of styles in tailored pyjamas, designed on the famous Kayser Bondor sizing principle. The tunic top is cut with a soft roll collar, and the new stand-away pockets fall smartly into position when the belt is tied. This crisp poplin washes easily, gives excellent wear and is available in many pretty pastel shades.

Price 63/-

KAYSER BONDOR

— TAILORED WITH YOU IN MIND —

twisted way
the special **LAVENDA** way
for strength and beauty





Stay smart all day—choose fabrics marked



TEBILIZED^{Regd} FOR TESTED CREASE-RESISTANCE



How fresh is a daisy?

A room where O-Cedar Polish has been at work—it's as fresh as any daisy. The air's sweet and free from dust. The furniture glows with the special beauty of burnished wood. Paint and enamel work, porcelain and glazed tiles—all testify to O-Cedar's shining efficiency. Yes; and dusting, cleaning and polishing need only one easy operation, when you use O-Cedar.

★ Don't forget to maintain the properties of your O-Cedar Mop by moistening the pad occasionally with a little O-Cedar Polish.

It's O, so easy... O, so economical...

O-Cedar

POLISH

Cleans as it polishes

The LONDON BEDDING CENTRE



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What is it? A permanent sales centre devoted exclusively, for the first time, to the display of Bedding from World-renowned manufacturers.



What does it do? It affords the unique opportunity of the widest selection and choice of Bedding displayed in settings that will appeal to all home and comfort lovers. Another John Perring enterprise.

JOHN PERRING Bedding Specialists **KNIGHTSBRIDGE**



**Hard or soft?
Thick or fine?
Upright or oblique?**

We make Swan nibs in such variety that it is possible for everyone to find contentment. And what greater satisfaction than to possess a Swan that "answers" to your hand! A precision instrument that never lets you down.

Swan nibs and fountain pens are available in a variety of colours, and may be fitted with rolled gold caps if desired.

PRICES FROM **30/7** INC. TAX

Ask your nearest Stationer or Jeweller.

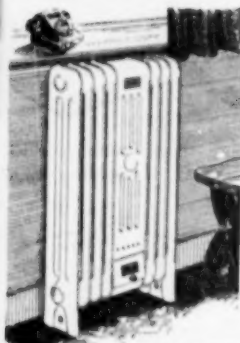
Swan Pens

MADE, 1900 & CO. LTD. 41 PARK STREET, LONDON W. 1 (Administration only)
Service Depots (if Shoppers): 110 New Bond Street, London, W. 1
33 Cheapside, London, E.C. 4, and 3 Exchange Street, Manchester 2

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MEANS REAL WARMTH-COMFORT FOR EVERY HOME



Hurseal oil-loaded
hermetically-sealed Gas Radiator.

Here's the newest and cosiest way of heating by gas—with the Hurseal Flueless Gas Radiator. The special diffusing oil sealed in the radiator transmits healthy warmth to every part of the room. With Hurseal Heat you can enjoy uniform warmth at the level you want regardless of the temperature outside. Electric and paraffin-burning models also available.

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Visit your local supplier for a demonstration of Hurseal Gas Radiators (there are three sizes) or, in case of difficulty, write for illustrated leaflet direct to Hurseal Ltd.



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THE WALPAMUR CO LTD. DARWEN, LANCASHIRE

Why put up with an out-of-date cleaner?

Replace your old cleaner **NOW** with the latest Hoover model

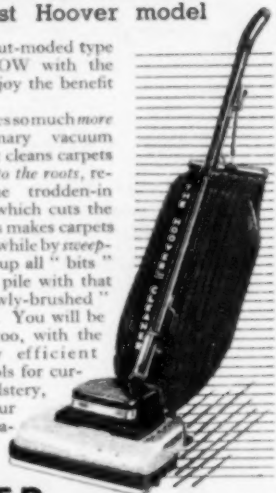
If yours is one of the old out-moded type of cleaners replace it NOW with the latest Hoover Model and enjoy the benefit of all the newest features.

Remember, the "Hoover" does so much more than ordinary vacuum cleaners. It cleans carpets right down to the roots, removing the trodden-in gritty dirt which cuts the pile. It thus makes carpets last longer; while by sweeping it takes up all "bits" leaving the pile with that fresh, "newly-brushed" appearance. You will be delighted, too, with the extremely efficient cleaning tools for curtains, upholstery, etc. Ask your Hoover Dealer to demonstrate.



THE HOOVER DOES SO MUCH MORE THAN ORDINARY VACUUM CLEANERS

The Hoover lifts every little section of the carpet from the floor in turn and, by means of the exclusive Apilator (illustrated) gently beats it on a cushion of air. It thus extracts the harmful gritty dirt from the carpet roots.



The **HOOVER**
BEATS...at it Sucks...at it Cleans

There is a Hoover Cleaner to suit every home. Prices, with cleaning tools, from 10 gu. to 22 gu. (plus tax). Hire Purchase available.

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N°5
CHANEL
PARIS

THE MOST TREASURED NAME IN PERFUME...

CHANEL

decor for to-day...



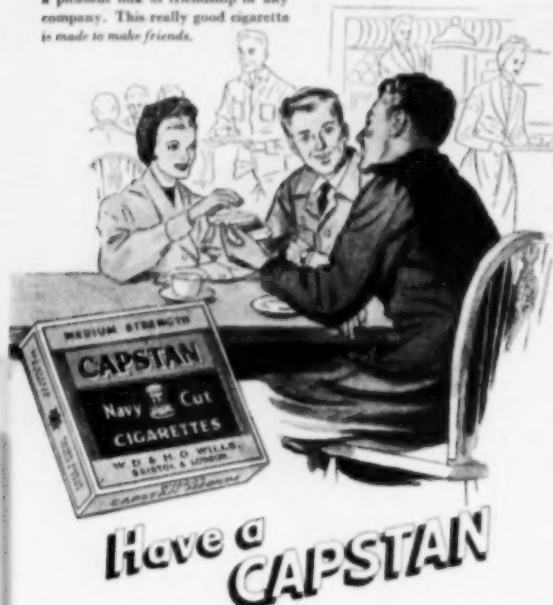
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Have a CAPSTAN

Owned by The Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.

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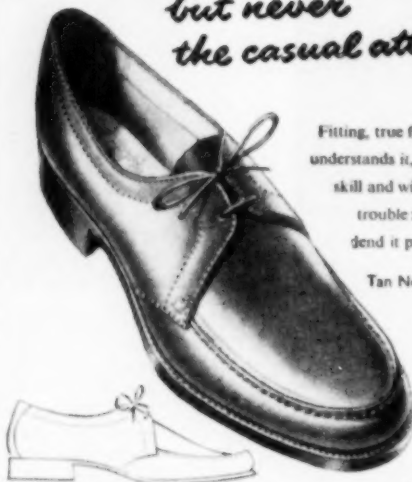
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treasure the
pencil that
makes writing
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In rolled gold, silver
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PROPELLING PENCILS

A 'Casual' shoe— but never the casual attitude!



Fitting, true fitting as Saxe
understands it, needs care and
skill and willingness to take
trouble: but what a dividend it pays in comfort!

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Footprint Fitting

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241 Regent St., 60 Old Broad St., 64 Gracechurch St.,
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KITCHEN STEAM IS HARD ON PAINT

BROLAC
CAN TAKE IT!
says Painter Bill



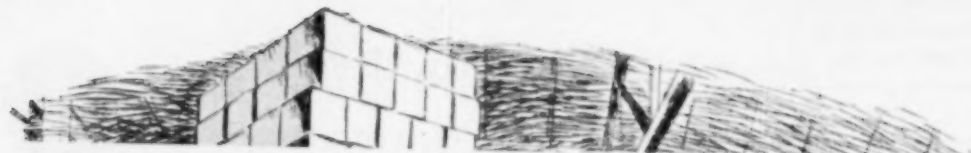
So you think there's nothing worse for a painting job than a steamy kitchen? Maybe you're right; but I've done kitchens and bathrooms too up and down this town with Brolac, and never a complaint yet. It's got HANCOX in it, and that means it dries as hard as nails but flexible at whatevelone—no cracks or flakes to spoil its good looks. It always pays to buy the best paint—it costs no more to put on, and you know a Brolac job is a job that's really going to last!

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SEA AIR, HOT SUN, CITY SMOKE

Brolac

DOUBLE PROTECTION PAINT
WITH THE ENAMEL FINISH

Send for FREE Brolac Colour Scheme Booklet to:
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He doubled the storage space — single-handed!



One battery electric tiering truck—that can lift the goods it carries and stack them to ceiling level . . . one man, who learned to operate it in 20 minutes . . . and available storage space is doubled within the same stores building! Doubled—or better. There are many cases in which storage space under high ceilings has been trebled by the use of high-lift electric tiering trucks. Space, time and labour can all be saved where electric trucks take over the jobs of portage, stacking and loading. Versatile, silent, fumeless, cheap to run, electric trucks cut costs and raise production.

For mechanical handling at lowest cost

ELECTRIC TRUCKS* POWERED BY
Exide-Ironclad BATTERIES

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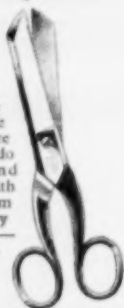
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EXIDE WORKS • CLIFTON JUNCTION • NEAR MANCHESTER

*The Battery Traction Department of Chloride Batteries Limited, 77 King Street, Manchester 3, will gladly discuss with you any aspect of electric traction.

**USING ME IS MOTHER'S FORM
OF "SHARP PRACTICE"**

Nothing seems to blunt her enthusiasm or my blades. I'm the finest kitchen pal a housewife ever had. There are at least a score of jobs you could do more easily and more efficiently with my assistance. I'm a strictly necessary kind of luxury—and by no means an expensive one.



**KUMFI-KUT
KITCHEN SCISSORS**

One of a famous family whose names speak for themselves.

They CUT, CHOP, SLICE, SHRED. Obtainable in 2 sizes, with Chromium-plated blades and coloured handles. The famous hanging wall-plate supplied (free with each pair).

6" - 9/4. 7" - 10/10.
With Stainless Steel Blades.

(7" Size only) 18/7.
From housewives, Cutlery and Stores everywhere. Send 2/6 in stamps for "KUMFI-KUTS IN THE KITCHEN", written by Marguerite Patten of "Woman's Hour" and Television fame, which is packed with useful hints and recipes, and the name and address of your nearest stockist to—

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MANZANILLA
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VERY FINE NATURAL
DRY SHERRY—
FULL FLAVOURED

Shippers of fine wines
for a century



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2nd Impression now ready

**'Guide to the
House of Commons'**

The first impression of this indispensable handbook has already been completely sold out. A second impression is now ready. 'Guide to the House of Commons,' published by *The Times*, gives a full record of the recent Election. It also gives you biographical details of members and candidates, with photographs of the former; complete analyses of members and their constituencies; and a General Election map. It is a necessary reference book from the point of view of the past, the present, and the future.



ROYAL 8VO., 320PP., BOUND CLOTH BOARDS, PRICE 10/6d.
or direct from the Publisher, price 11/3d., post free.

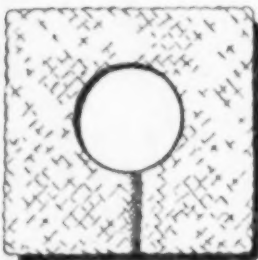
THE TIMES

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE, LONDON, EC4

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THIS IS A
STRAWBERRY**



IT is unblemished by slugs or grit. You can always pick fruit like this if only you will use **STRAWBEMATS** instead of loose, untidy straw. You will also get them earlier. Why not **CHEAT THE SLUGS** and trap the sun's heat? Obtain from your local dealer.



27/- for 36 12 in. mats.
40/- for 36 18 in. mats.
54/- for 36 21 in. mats.
72/- for 36 24 in. mats.

or, if time does not press,
send S.A.E. for our beautiful
folder* to

**STRAWBERRY
PROTECTION CO.,**

98, LANIVET, BODMIN, CORNWALL.

* After seeing this you will realise the advantages of Strawbems in a flash—they should last you for 5 years!



This Jacobite glass bears an engraved portrait of Prince Charlie, and was a favourite device for expressing loyalty to the exiled Stuarts. It was in glasses like this that Drambuie, the Prince's own liqueur, was originally served.

Drambuie

INVALID CARRIAGES
PETROL, ELECTRIC
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HAND PROPELLED TRICYCLES
TRILOX
Dursley Road,
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AUTOCAR
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to get more miles per gallon, better performance and to keep your car or lorry, English or American, on the road continuously. Electrical and Carburettor Service for all Cars and Trucks. Ample stocks of genuine spares.

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Bridges. Opposite Tate Gallery,
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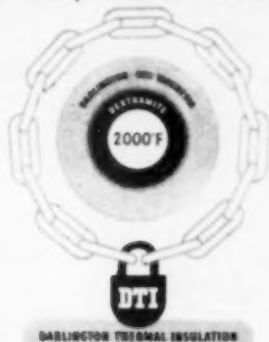
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Darlington High Temperature Insulation



Dextramite, produced primarily as hot surface protection for 85% Magnesia Covering, provides high efficiency insulation up to 2,000°F. Dextramite is inert chemically and has a micro-porous structure similar to the magnesia covering with a corresponding thermal efficiency at the high-temperature range. Dextramite has relatively high mechanical strength. Resident representatives are available in the major industrial areas throughout Great Britain and overseas for planning and installation of complete schemes to individual needs.



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S.D. 167A

Parsons rule with a rod of CHAIN

but it isn't... IRON!



Parsons 'HIGH TEST' chain is hardened and tempered STEEL Chain.

We rule that our 'HIGH TEST' chain when tested to destruction must, before breaking, stretch to a point at which the links bind on each other: in effect become a rod.

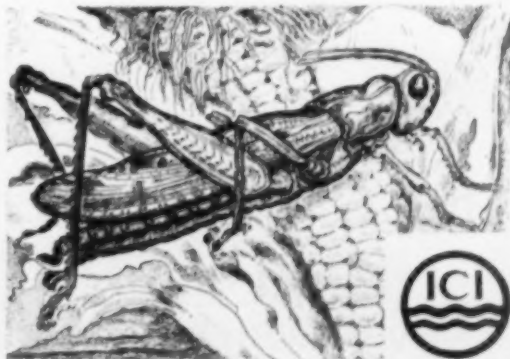
Parsons 'HIGH TEST' chain is 50% stronger and 20% lighter than the same nominal size of wrought-iron chain.

Parsons Chains

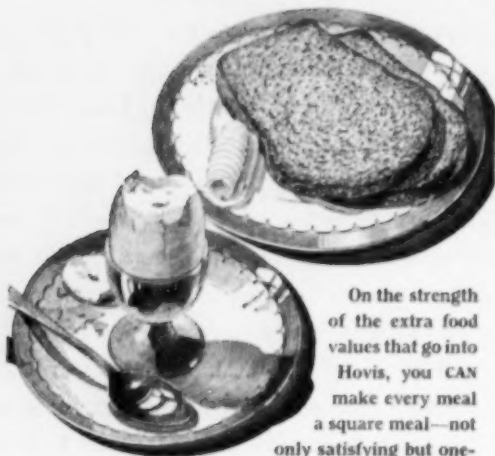
Parsons Chain Co. Ltd., Slough-on-Severn, Worcs.

'Gammexane'

'Gammexane' is a proprietary name given to a range of remarkable new insecticides developed as a result of wartime discoveries by I.C.I. research chemists. They are based on benzene hexachloride (BHC), a compound first prepared by Michael Faraday as far back as 1825, which can exist in four forms — known as the alpha, beta, gamma and delta "isomers" — each having the same molecular formula but different properties. The achievement of the I.C.I. chemists was their discovery that one of these isomers possessed remarkable insecticidal properties. By isolating and testing the different isomers, they established in 1943 that BHC's insecticidal powers lay almost entirely in its gamma isomer, and that in pure gamma BHC they had an insecticide which was, in some respects, the most effective ever discovered. 'Gammexane' insecticides, based on gamma BHC, mark a significant advance because, though their effect on insects is both deadly and persistent, they are almost entirely harmless to men and animals. At home, in farms and factories, they have eradicated pests ranging from cattle ticks and wireworms to cockroaches, bed-bugs and the house fly. Overseas they have proved the most powerful of all weapons against the locust.



**Every meal
a square meal...**



On the strength of the extra food values that go into Hovis, you CAN make every meal a square meal—not only satisfying but one-and-a-half times more nourishing...

**and thank Hovis
for that**



This egg beater lasts a lifetime!

It does all the beating jobs in the kitchen, quicker and without effort... Thanks to smooth, easy running gears, and eight stainless steel blades that beat faster! It's the perfect gift for the busy housewife. Costs a little more—21/- (including Purchase Tax) but outlasts all others. From all good Stores and Ironmongers.

Prestige egg beater



Ask for

HARDEN'S TEA
*in the red packet
and drink better tea...
on the strength of it!*

Formerly known as the famous DOCTOR Tea and still packed by
Harden Bros. & Lindsay Ltd., 121 Cannon Street, London, E.C.4.



By Appointment
To Her Majesty the Queen



**Cerebos
SALT**

CEREBOS IODISED SALT—ALSO AVAILABLE

Fortune

makes the
heart
grow fonder



*Pictured below: Truffle and
Nut Whirl two of the chocolates in
delicious Fortune assortment, made by
CALEY OF NORWICH*





*By Appointment
Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H.M.
King George VI.*



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Purveyor of Cherry Heering
to H.M.
King Frederick IX.*



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Purveyor of Cherry Heering
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to H.M.
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Precious moments

Through four generations CHERRY HEERING has
witnessed as well as created many precious moments.
To-day, supplies are still not unlimited, but this
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wherever you meet with it.



CHERRY HEERING

World famous liqueur since 1818



For
weekends
and
weeks
off

A well-bred sports coat is a perfect companion. We have a large selection of patterns, in excellent materials, from £5 8 8.

When actively engaged in being leisured, wear this TEE SHIRT—interlock cotton material, quarter sleeves, roll collar neck, in light blue, navy, lemon, grey, beige and tomato. Sizes 36-44. Price 14 6.



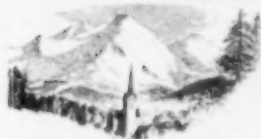
For legs at leisure we have: Diagonal-weave Saxories in blue, brown, ivory—£5. Grey worsted flannels with a chalk stripe—£4.17.6. In 6 lengths of leg with zip fronts and the famous Flexway waistband that keeps the trousers up and the shirt down.

Austin Reed
OF REGENT STREET

LONDON & PRINCIPAL CITIES

LONDON TELEPHONE: REGENT 6789

An achievement unsurpassed in watch-making history



THIRTY-SIX years ago, the Rolex Watch Company obtained, for the first time in history, one of the coveted National Physical Laboratory Kew 'A' certificates for a small-size wrist-watch—an unheard-of thing in those days!

Since then, Rolex technicians have been steadily improving Rolex watches, breaking more and more records at observatories all over the world. And at last comes news of the crowning achievement of those years of research. Of a recent batch

of watches entered, 116 were awarded Kew 'A' certificates. It is an achievement unsurpassed in watch-making history!

So the House of Rolex, who have led the way in watch-making for so many years, add another triumph to their proud record.

If you're lucky enough to get hold of one of these stainless steel Kew 'A' Oyster watches, remember that you'll be owning a watch that can really claim to be one of the few superlative watches in the world.

Get free copy of the "Story of Rolex," inside story of the world's most famous watches, also address of nearest stockist. Write The Rolex Watch Company Limited, 1 Green Street, London, W.1.



THE ROLEX WATCH COMPANY LIMITED (H. WILSDORF, Governing Director)

Quiet Emblem

A fanfare of trumpets or a bevy of adjectives can do nothing to improve the qualities of a good cigar. After nearly a hundred years experience of cigars Benson & Hedges have little use for either. They leave it to this quiet emblem to signify that La Diadema, especially selected for Benson & Hedges own importation, is a cigar equal to any occasion when only the best will do.

BENSON and HEDGES

OLD BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.





Sleep sweeter- Bourn-vita

★ Made by Cadbury—
only 1/10d. per 1/16b. tin



The garden needs grubbing out,
and hints grow plainer
that your wife's fur coat
is not fit to be seen.
The superior charlady
no longer obliges,
and a pile of greasy dishes
is your target for tonight.
Succumb to temptation
and take comfort in the arms
of your Parker-Knoll.

*The
CAMPDEN MODEL.
Ask to see it at some
local Furnishers. To be
sure you get the genuine
article, see that the
salesman writes the name
"Parker-Knoll" on your
receipt.*

Parker-Knoll

PARKER-KNOLL LIMITED · TEMPLE END · HIGH WYCOMBE · BUCKS

IT'S
GOOD!



IT'S
JOLLY
GOOD!

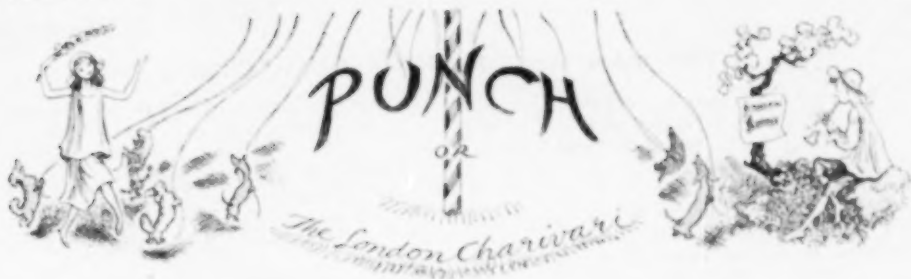


IT'S
MONK & GLASS
CUSTARD



**JELLIES
TOO!**

Monk & Glass Table Jellies have
long been favourites for flavour.



CHARIVARIA

FRUIT-GROWERS announce that owing to the recent frosts and cold nights the strawberry season will be delayed about ten days. This will give Mr. Webb time for one extra reversal of his policy on cream.



The Chinese Communist Party has asked the Press to criticize all its shortcomings, and has announced that there will be no censorship, so that newspapers can say what they like. Chinese editors are now trying to find out from Party headquarters what it is they like.

The Spirit of the Times

"TEAS SERVED ON RESTAURANT FLOOR."

Notice outside a London café

The Nizam of Hyderabad is reported to be down to his last £30,000,000. A clear case for Marshall Aid.

The members of a British dance band have all put on weight as a result of a Continental tour. So now the management is billing the combination as a specially augmented orchestra.

Not Quite Cricket

"Sir, I hope we won't see any more kissing among bowlers as was the case at the Ilfracombe Club recently. Admittedly the particular skip played two fine woods to snatch an apparently hopeless game out of the fire, but I think the display of enthusiasm by one of the team in running up the green and kissing and hugging the skip is foreign to the spirit of men's bowls. It reminded one of some Continental soccer team. I trust we shall not descend to this in bowls."

AMAZED,

Letter in South African paper

According to the Professional Hairdressers' Association success in running a local business is largely a matter of maintaining cordial relations with women clients, both inside and outside the salon. It is quite permissible to greet them with a casual wave in the street.

"DR. MALAN LOST HIS TROUSERS"

By Arrangements with *The Times* "The Scotsman"

No wonder he is a bit upset with the British Press.



THE MAN WHO PLANTED GUM-TREES

IN my heart I planted gum-trees
Thickly on the barren plain.
These have flourished well; but some trees
Will not grow again.

Cherry-tree and flowering almond,
Musky-scented tamarind,
These require a certain balm and
Softness in the wind.

Baobab and sacred Bo-tree
Showed no tendency to sprout;
Hardy they may be, but no tree
Likes a lifelong drought.

Cedar and the Chinese ginkgo,
Quercus in its several forms,
Lacking their sufficient drink go
Down before the storms.

Birch and alder used to grow there,
Poplars tall along the way,

But they could not stand the snow there,
Tumbled in decay.

Sycamore and maple flourished,
Redwood of enormous girth,
But how could their roots be nourished
In such barren earth?

One by one they crashed in splinters,
Trunks grown rotten long ago,
Slain by summer's drouth and winter's
Cruel blinding snow.

Only the reflective gum-tree
Suffered not decay nor fall;
Better such a dismal dumb tree
Than no trees at all.

I have planted such, and many
To the time of harvest come;
Wine and fruit I have not any.
But a deal of gum.

R. P. LISTER

A DAY WITH WHITSTOUT

THE *Daily Herald* recently reported that the Minister of Food, Mr. Maurice Webb, finds it necessary to sleep in a camp bed in his office three nights a week. "When the House rises he goes back to his office, works at his Ministerial papers until the early hours of the morning," the *Herald* declared. "Before the cleaners are in next morning he is at his desk again. He sends out for a breakfast of coffee and toast, consumes it while he works."

This statement, with its ring of urgency and its echo of the wartime devotion of many of our leaders, surprised some people who do not know how the Ministry of Food functions. The simplest way to instruct these people is to depict an average day at the Ministry during the last two months.

The scene is the Ministry's operations room. The desks on the floor are manned by alert young people. High on the walls, accessible only by raised platforms and ladders, are maps, dotted with pins of many colours, which are moved about on command by trim young girls. In the background is the

unceasing hum of telegraph keys, message printers and secret coding devices. At the centre of the buzzing activity is George ("B.P.") Whitstout, operations officer on duty. The "B.P." is an office nickname. It stands for bulk purchase. Whitstout is conversing with Gregson Letchworth, an admiring junior official. In a sense it is not an ordinary day, for the Minister is to announce changes in certain rations which he has been promising for some weeks.

"It's all a matter of logistics, Letchworth," says "B.P." "infrastructure, you might call it. It doesn't matter how daring an operation may seem, if you've got the materials, the men and the will you can do it. Monty showed us that in Africa."

"Yes, sir," says Letchworth deferentially.

"Personally," Whitstout goes on, "I don't think there's anything to worry about. We've got the goods and we can do it."

"You always were a brave one, sir," Letchworth says, his voice hushed in awe.

Suddenly there is silence in the

room. A red light has flashed on above the maps: this means a telephone call from the Minister for the operations officer on duty. A whisper, hoarse and strained, is heard: "It's topside calling. The old man himself." Whitstout, calm but quick, whips the telephone from its rest. "Yes, sir!" he says smartly. During the next few moments he repeats that phrase several times, not inquiringly but in the time-honoured manner of an officer getting his orders. Then: "Yes, sir, at once, sir," and he replaces the telephone.

Now Whitstout rises in his place and smooths his uniform as Letchworth calls the staff to attention. "Ladies and gentlemen," he begins, his voice firm, "it's come. The old man has just given me the word. An ounce on the butter ration. An ounce off bacon. Full speed ahead. You all know what to do." He sits down.

The room becomes a veritable beehive of activity. Secret dispatches go out to regional offices and local boards. Inspectors are ordered to strategic points to watch the new plan in operation. Butter and bacon



A DREAM OF FAIR MANNERS

[A Two-weeks' Courtesy Campaign is now being held in France]



"If you don't haggle they think you're a tourist."

dumps are alerted for possible emergency calls. The Ministry's official historian is told what is happening so that it may be suitably recorded.

Everyone is on the *qui vive* that morning. A biscuit manufacturer is reported to be using butter instead of margarine in biscuits for domestic consumption, and enforcement officers are sent out to round him up and bring him in. Ministry scouts in radio cars warn that a deputation of grocers is on its way to demand an end of the points rationing scheme; everybody grabs his brief case and mans the barricades, but it turns out to be a false alarm. Some housewives are reported to be irritated by the change in the butter ration, because five ounces go into

a butter dish less easily than four. In consequence of this it is later decided not to irritate the housewives further by permitting the sale of Irish cream.

Soon it is lunch time, and all go to the Ministry canteen, which offers a choice between rabbit and cod. It is a quick lunch, allowing all who need it an opportunity to lie down for a quarter of an hour (for almost all Ministry officials have moved their beds into the building since these stirring days began late in February).

Soon another urgent order from topside jars into the afternoon calm. "B.P." is out of his chair in a minute, shouting commands to the girls at the maps, moving their pins this way and that—red pins

standing for canned Mexican meat advancing nearer the front, blue pins representing canned milk doing the same, brown pins for baked beans in supporting positions behind. The preparations, the logistics that Whitstout loves so well, must be made. The actual operation is weeks off, but it's none too early to get ready.

So the hours pass, enlivened by an almost unbelievable rumour that one of the Ministry's most trusted employees has been sacked. He had aroused suspicion in the first place by not eating lunch for several days at the Ministry canteen. Then, to-day, as he left the building the X-ray eye, past which all who depart must go, spotted secret documents on his person. They are, in the opinion of the Ministry's security section, conclusive evidence that he intended to "leak" the information that table-jelly tablets, compounds and crystals, are to be down-pointed. Unbelievable though the rumour may seem, it is true. The trusted employee has been drummed out of the Ministry, made to turn in his badge.

The shock of this news makes everyone yearn for quitting-time, but just before Whitstout, Letchworth and the others are to make way for their relief there is another sensation. The super-sensitive radar screen has picked up two ships heading for United Kingdom ports, one with a load of frozen rabbits, the other with her holds teeming with cod. For Whitstout it is a moment of horror, but he knows what to do. The communications officer is ordered to signal them to turn round. The message is given the highest priority, and so is the reply: the ships will not turn round; the cargoes were ordered by one of the preceding Ministers of Food and they have contracts to prove it. Whitstout toys with the idea of asking the Admiralty to sink the ships, but abandons it on humanitarian grounds. There is nothing for it; the cargoes must be accepted and the public must consume them. Squaring his shoulders, "B.P." reaches for the telephone. "Put me through to Public Relations," he says . . .

SECOND STORY

PERHAPS I had told my hurricane story too often. Anyway my friends thought so. I left for the Colonies under a cloud.

Two days after landing I read in the local gazette of a situation vacant for a radio announcer on an up-country commercial station. The station manager asked for my qualifications. I told him my hurricane story. "It's a lie," he said, "but you're hired."

The mike stood on a table with a gramophone beside it. There were some records, books and a telephone. The manager handed me a file of adverts. "Put each of them out twice in the morning. The rest of the time keep folk amused." With these instructions he left me.

At nine I began my programme with "The Ride of the Valkyries." At nine-four the engineer shot his head in and asked why the silence. I opened the mike. After "The Ride" I read an advert for sparking-plugs and told listeners my hurricane story. Then I gave them fifteen minutes' undiluted dance music.

At ten-seven I was talking fish-paste. The phone rang. The Valkyries were still handy; I thought they'd be good cover. I put them on and answered the phone. A farmer told me his brindled cow had strayed in the Portsea district and he wanted me to advertise for her. "And say the finder is to milk her at once," he added.

The Valkyries had dropped into a slow walk. I asked the farmer to hang on and wound the Valkyries up. Then I took further particulars and told him our charges.

Shortly after the S.O.S. had gone out the phone rang again. Someone had seen a brindled cow grazing near the Portsea level-crossing half an hour earlier. I passed this on to listeners. My phone kept on ringing; folk in the Portsea district seemed neighbourly. My programme became interlarded with a running commentary on the cow's progress. If I had known more local topography my commentary might have been clearer.

The station manager rang up.

"Is this brindled cow your idea of a joke?" he shouted.

"It's genuine," I assured him. "It's bringing us in good money."

Sarcasm upsets me. To soothe myself I picked up a book and started reading it over the mike. It was a railway time-table. I kept on doggedly for two pages. Then I gave listeners more dance music and the sparking-plugs for the second time round.

It was getting on for lunch time. I hoped the cow would be found before my duty-turn ended; I like to see a thing through. There was a heavy bump against the door. "The cow!" I said to myself. I am a firm believer in coincidence. Five minutes later, to a scherzo by Mendelssohn, I was drinking warm milk out of a fire-bucket with the cow tied safely to a stake in the compound.

The phone rang. It was the farmer. He said his brindled cow had just been brought in. I glanced hurriedly out of the window. There was my cow all right. A man stood beside her, looking grimly towards the studio. The long arm of coincidence had over-reached itself.

A week later I was able to return to England with my new story of how I stood my trial for cattle-lifting.

HH

BACK ROOM JOYS

Posting a Lot of Letters

THERE are few pleasures better

Than posting, not one letter,
Not two, not three, but a lot;
Pushing them through the slot
Either singly to hear each one
drop

Or together in one great profligate
plop.

The beauty

Lies not only in so manifestly having
done your duty,
In the great victorious "That's
that"

As you put on your hat

To walk to the post,

But more, but most,

What's pleasing

Is squeezing

The many of them together, neat
and square;

The soft sigh of the escaping air;
The shuffling of them like cards into
a pack

(Like cards, coloured front, plain
back)

All in order,

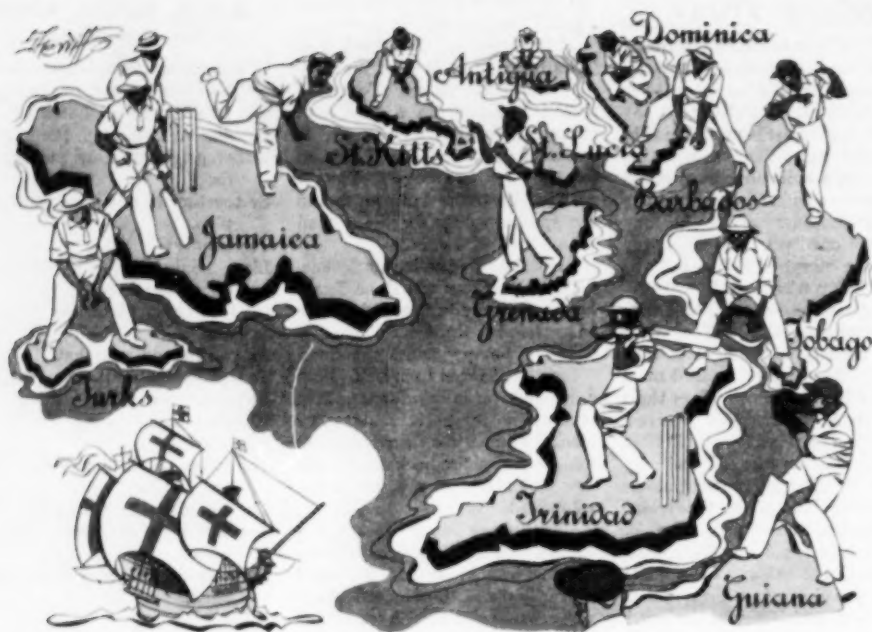
All stamps in the top right-hand
corner;

Their firmness, their convenient
size;

And the foreknowledge of a plenti-
tude of replies.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON





THE WEST INDIANS

THE arrival of our annual allocation of touring cricketers at Tilbury or Southampton is now accepted as the unofficial opening of the season. The covers are removed (from the typewriters) and the chroniclers of the summer game, reeking of embrocation, begin laboriously to get their hands in and their arms over.

First we see the tourists on board ship: the deck is wet and cold and the mackintoshes belly in the stiff April breeze. Sir Pelham Warner is there with a warm greeting and a goodly company of old England captains, just stirring from hibernation. We learn from the tourists that the party is in the pink (except for poor old Blank, the spin-bowler, who slipped on a cocktail olive in the Bay of Biscay—or was it the Channel?—and sprained an ankle) and itching to get in some practice. We read the crisp *Who's Who*-ish pen portraits of the players and file the details away for use at

Lord's, the Oval or Old Trafford. ("In private life," we shall say at some suitable moment, "he's a builder with three children and a degree in engineering." And the clergyman in the row behind will lean forward, cough, and say "Excuse me, but he's thirty, actually—had his thirtieth birthday during the Nottingham match.")

Next, we follow the players on their shopping expeditions in the West End, see them on television, hear them "In Town To-night," and, at long last, study them at the nets. This is of course where the real writers peel off their overcoats. "B. was bowling only at half-speed," writes Mannington-Falkirk of the *Sunday Echo*, "but it is quite obvious from his beautifully controlled run and perfect follow-through (left shoulder pointing to the tea-tent) that he will play havoc with our timid, crease-bound county batsmen. He still has an unfortunate tendency, however, to

bowl full-tosses at the square-leg umpire."

And then April runs out and the tourists and journalists travel to Worcester for the first match. . . .

Well, we are already toe-deep in the new season and the writers have told us all we need to know about the West Indian cricketers. Nearly all, anyway: I am still doubtful about one or two points—for example, how these fellows managed to pick up their cricket. Unless we are prepared to accept the preposterous notion that cricket *evolved* in the islands, emerged from a host of indigenous pat-ball relaxations (as it did in England) to become a standard, codified national game, we must assume that it was imported.

We must assume that cricket was *planted* in the West Indies. But who were these pioneer planters? Most of them, I like to assume, were the "difficult" sons of stiff, starchy, and therefore unbending,

Victorian papas; young men lacking somewhat in moral fibre and character. They were not exactly ne'er-do-wells, and certainly not delinquents in the accepted sense, but they did, regrettably, reveal a certain inability, shall we say, to apply themselves unrelentingly to the pursuit of respectability and success in business. So they were bundled off to the Colonies where, it was thought, the great heat and poisonous insects would at last bring their manliness to the surface. They arrived, rolled up their sleeves, made clearings in the forest big enough for cricket pitches and then built their bungalows. And that, children, is roughly how the British Empire was born.

From the start the planters saw to it that the wickets were good, with plenty of unresponsive jute matting over the hard earth: the slightest flaw might have been fatal, for the bowling of the exuberant recently-emancipated coloured boys varied between very fast and faster and was intensely hostile. Day in, day out, as the bananas lengthened and the sugar cane ripened, the air of Trinidad, Barbados and Jamaica hummed and whistled with activity. The planters dug themselves in. Occasionally one of them fell under the blow of a spring-heeled, catapulting Constantine or Martindale and was buried with high honours. Such were the perils of pioneering.

From the first, too, good batsmanship of the classical Gunn-Shrewsbury school paid rich dividends on these wickets; the planters played straight with their left legs well down the wicket and their noses over the ball. And so it was that when, in their turn, the coloured boys tried their luck with the bat they wasted no time on the primitive agriculture of the English village green. They were stylists from the start—which explains why the

islands have been able to produce such remarkable batsmen as George Headley and Everton Weekes after only twenty-odd years of Test cricket.

The records tell us that England first took formal notice of cricket in the West Indies in 1895, when a team of amateurs toured the islands and found "good club cricket" being played in every clearing. Two years later two strong teams captained by Lord Hawke and Arthur Priestley made the trip, and both of them were soundly beaten in their opening matches against "All Trinidad." The men who did the damage were two specialists in forked lightning, Woods and Cumberbatch, the first of many West Indian bowlers to hear the sweet sound of leather against prime English ribs.

Our visitors this year are once again blessed with fast-bowling talent of exceptional quality and are said to be the strongest batting side in West Indian history, yet time may prove that they have left their most valuable asset—their sub-tropical, muscle-loosening weather—at home. No amount of rum will compensate for its loss; nor will half a dozen sweaters. One way of

are falling from trees with excitement, when women swoon at the possibility of a run-out and stands collapse under the tom-tom tapping of rhythmic feet. Most of our county grounds have a tree or two of sorts along the boundary, and the season is still young enough for successful transplanting. (County committees please copy.)

There is one other thing the writers have not told me—something that has given me dreadful nightmares ever since, at the age of ten, I first decided to play for England: they have not told me whether a black or dark brown hand can disguise spin more effectively than a white hand. "Watch the bowler's hand," they used to tell me, "and play for the break." Well, in my dreams I always opened my innings against Constantine (*père* or *fils*), the arm came over, and hand and ball were merely an amorphous brown mass. I played for an off-spinner and was caught easily at first-slip off a leg-break. Some nights I played for a leg-break and was clean bowled by an off-spinner, but always I was tortured and uprooted. And I still do not know whether my fears were legitimate or not. This summer I shall be watching

those brown fingers very carefully through binoculars. Williams (or Ramadhin) will puzzle Hutton, say, with a ball that nips back from outside the off-stump, and I shall be delighted that I have at last identified the off-spinner; and the next morning Man-nington-Falkirk, in the *Echo*, will say "... Then at ninety-three Hutton almost succumbed to a superb googly from Williams (or Ramadhin)" and I shall be livid.

And that must be all for the moment. See you all at the first Test Match, then, among the branches; or falling off the gas-holder, perhaps.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



GERRY
GOMEZ

EVERTON
WEEKES

JOHN
GODDARD

FRANK
WORRELL

JEFFERY
STOLLMAYER

making the West Indians feel reasonably at home, even in an inclement summer, would be for our spectators to shed their prickly reserve and wax ebullient. Batsmen such as Weekes, Worrell, Rae, Walcott and Stollmeyer are only at their best, I understand, when spectators

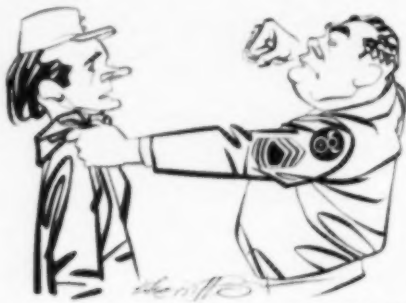
AT THE PICTURES

Chance of a Lifetime—The Big Lift

ANYONE who has read that *Chance of a Lifetime* (Director: BERNARD MILES) was refused as "not entertainment" by

the big cinema circuits, and had to be forced on to one of them by the Film Selection Committee of the Board of Trade, is likely—if this very fact does not scare him away—to wonder, when he sees it, what the objection was. In my view the film certainly is entertainment, and most people will enjoy it; nobody should be deterred from going by any idea that it is "propaganda" (the point of view it puts is almost a truism). It may be that the objectors started with the idea that has sapped the life of so many British pictures in the past: the idea that no picture can attract customers and keep them happy unless it is bathed in continuous bright light and includes five or six scenes of people pretending to have a wonderful time with champagne in night-clubs. This is a story about industrial relations; it presents a credible set of circumstances, in a small factory making agricultural machinery, and its characters, workmen and employer alike, are shown without condescension or that type-ridicule that is so tempting to the tired fiction-writer. It winds up, as might have been expected, with the implication that there is much to be said on both sides and they would do well to co-operate more—not exactly a violent propagandist message for either Communism or Fascism. BASIL RADFORD makes an admirable managing director; the fact that he is irritable, hot-tempered and humourless makes him an individual portrait, not a gibe at employers in general. Similarly the workmen are not the collarless comedians that a film

usually makes of workmen, but believably disrespectful or discontented or considerate or conciliatory individuals themselves. The story holds one's interest, the dialogue is full of those touches of authenticity



[The Big Lift]

Peace Hath Her Victories

Felix—Unnamed; Hank—PAUL DOUGLAS

that make an audience murmur with delighted recognition, and the photography is pleasing throughout. It's nonsense to say this film isn't entertainment.

The best part of *The Big Lift* (Director: GEORGE SEATON) is the documentary-style demonstration of



[Chance of a Lifetime]

Labor Omnia Vincit

Stevens—BERNARD MILES; Morris—JULIEN MITCHELL
Mr. Dickinson—BASIL RADFORD

the way the American part of the Berlin air lift was handled. Apart from this it amounts to propaganda, with all concerned heavily oversimplified for easy understanding: each of the two U.S. schools of thought is given its representative, some attempt is made to show at least two different kinds of German, only the Russians are understood to

be all regrettably alike. (The British aren't involved at all.) MONTGOMERY CLIFT and PAUL DOUGLAS appear as two sergeants, one of whom falls too easily for a German girl whose motives are selfish, the other being a belligerent German-hater who resents having been sent "to feed the Krauts" at all, and makes the fact clear to them at every opportunity. Yes, this really is propaganda, for "the American way of life"; but it succeeds in being entertaining enough, partly because of the interest one has to take in the operational

details of the great undertaking (the film was made in "the exact locales" concerned, and the U.S. army characters shown, apart from the two principals, are the real men on the spot) and partly because of some slick and amusing dialogue and by-play.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Among the London shows there is a bright British thriller with a particularly good script, *State Secret* (3/5/50), and a good piece of French clowning, *Jour de Fête* (3/5/50); and Danny Kaye's *The Inspector General* (19/4/50) is worth a visit—or even another visit.

Releases include *Lost Boundaries* (1/2/50), a restrained and not over-dramatized but always interesting contribution to the colour-bar or race-relations "cycle"; and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (26/4/50), a simple, enjoyable Western in colour.

RICHARD MALLETT

CONTINUING RATHER COLD

I HAVE never been able to understand why it is that such a very cold and formal relationship should be thought necessary between Inland Revenue officials and members of the public. For my part, I always attempt in my dealings with them to create an atmosphere of geniality, going so far as to outrage all the promptings of a reserved and proud nature by introducing exclamation marks into my letters. I have had little success, as the following correspondence will show:

4th July 1949

H.M. Inspector of Taxes

DEAR SIR,—You will no doubt remember that when I wrote to you some time ago on the subject of my expenses I argued that the total should include the cost of lighting and heating the room in which I do my work. To this you agreed. Since then a further item of expenditure has arisen to which I hope you will give your most careful consideration.

I don't know whether in the course of your duties you have ever experienced a feeling of complete mental exhaustion, a species of anaesthesia of the intellectual faculties? If so, you no doubt have your own method of dealing with it: a cup of tea, perhaps, or a quick rub down with alcohol, if office facilities permit. In such a case I usually take an egg beaten up in brandy. Now the cost of one such treatment is certainly not great, but in recent months I have had recourse to it pretty regularly. May I include this item in my list of expenses, as follows?

Light and Heat ..	£10 0 0
Writing paper ..	3 0 0
Paper fasteners ..	2 6
Brandy and egg ..	23 4 0
	£36 6 6

The weather here has been exceptionally unsettled. Let us hope that it improves for the holiday season!

Yours faithfully ...

8th October 1949

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your query of July 4th, expenses may be claimed for heat and light, but not for such items as renewal of fire-grates, repairs to window casements, or rail and steamer fares.

Yours faithfully ...

9th October 1949

H.M. Inspector of Taxes

DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter of the 8th inst., and agree that it would be ludicrous indeed to expect the Government to pour out money in writers' steamer fares or in never-ending repairs to window casements. The point raised in my original letter, however, had to do with brandy and egg, and whether I might include the cost of a reasonable quantity of this stimulant in my expenses. You will remember that I quoted the amount of £23 4s. as my expenditure under this head, but by now I find that this sum has risen to £52 8s. The fact is that the work on which I am at present engaged—a Life of the Venerable Bede—demands an almost mystical abandonment to his theme on the part of the writer, and I cannot deny that the admission to the diaconate by St. John of Beverley has cost me some two dozen eggs and the best part of a bottle and a half of brandy.

I suppose that you will by now have returned from your summer holiday. It will no doubt be some time before you are able to give your attention to my little query, so perhaps it will not seem too early for festive good wishes. A happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

Yours faithfully ...

22nd January 1950

BRANDY AND EGG

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 9th of October 1949, I regret to say that no allowance can be made to authors for alcoholic refreshment consumed during the execution of their work. Nevertheless, a claim for expenses on account

of malt extract, or any other suitable form of concentrated nourishment, would, if accompanied by a properly authenticated medical certificate, always receive the most careful and sympathetic consideration. In passing, I suggest that if the Life upon which you are at present engaged is that of a dependent relative a tax position of an entirely different kind would arise, and you might expect an appropriate allowance on your Schedule E assessment.

Yours faithfully ...

23rd January 1950

H.M. Inspector of Taxes

BRANDY AND EGG

DEAR SIR,—I very much regret your decision on this point, and I can only say that had I not been firmly convinced that the Income Tax authorities would have been amenable to reason I should not have been led by the demands of my work into reckless excesses out of all proportion to my means. The Life upon which I am engaged is that of the Venerable Bede.

The weather here has been miserably cold. We must look forward to the spring!

Yours faithfully ...

12th March 1950

ALLOWANCE FOR DEPENDENT
RELATIVE

DEAR SIR,—I regret that your previous inquiry appears to have been mislaid, but further to my letter of the 22nd of January, I should be glad to know the following details re Vernon Bate, concerning whom, as a dependent relative, you claim relief from tax:

1. Age?
2. Married or Single?
3. Any personal income?

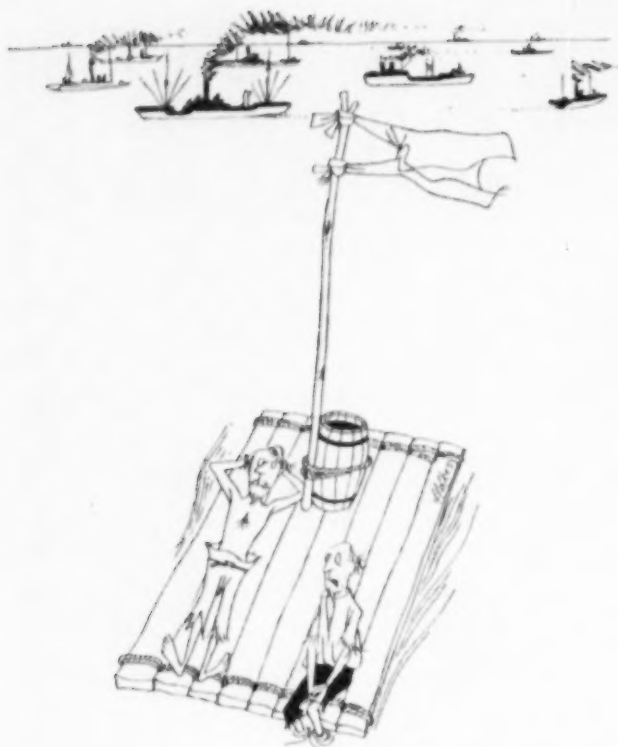
I should also require a declaration by you to the effect that Mr. Bate is not employed part-time as an attendant at a shooting-gallery or fairground.

Yours faithfully ...

There I shall leave it. What rankles most is the dreadful official coldness of the man.

T. S. WATT





"Nothing to be gained from posting a look-out, I suppose."

THE STERN POST OF DUTY

10.40. SWEEP majestically into the room; direct a side-long glance at my table, and seat myself firmly before it. Apart from a few Law Reports and a bill for 17/6 the table is completely empty. Open the bill and scrutinize it with passionate intensity, speculating as to the age, sex and character of the clerk who drew it up, and as to how they are getting on in that line of business.

10.45. Enter Simons, fresh from a cup of coffee. Borrow his paper, open cautiously, and light upon a speech by a retired Dominions judge containing his well-known peroration on the warm fellowship of the Bar. Ask Simons how much warm fellowship he has noticed while at

the Bar. Not much, he says, but when people are left out in the cold there is always a certain amount of warm fellowship. It occurs to me that the Bar is like an iceberg. "Why is the Bar like an iceberg?" I suddenly say, plunging about in my mind for the answer, as one does when in Court. "Because," I proceed, "it always manages to keep afloat, though the best part of it is completely submerged." Simons thinks little of this.

11.5. Consider how my riddle about the iceberg could be improved.

11.15-1.0. Read the Law Reports and ruminate.

1.0. Weigh up the rival merits of Hall and the coffee-house as

lunch-places. The coffee-house is excellent, but not like Hall; moreover, unlicensed. Go there, however, and find that Stentor—I do not know his name—is also there. If circumstances favoured him in other respects this young man might be popular with the Judges.

1.30. Back again. Table still empty. Smoke and ruminate.

2.5. Brenchley comes in and asks whether I think he would be safe in advising that, where a testator gives legacies, and then gives the rest of his money to "A," "money" means personal estate generally and not merely money. I express my opinion with firmness, and a discussion ensues.

2.20. Stimulated by mental exercise, I indulge in what the psychologists call a "phantasy." A Yorkshireman could make a nice mess of his will if he liked, I reflect. Imagine him squashed in an arm-chair at his solicitor's office. "All t' brass to t' laus!" he bawls. The pale clerk shifts uneasily. "Your wife?" he hazards. "Aye!" thunders the Yorkshireman. "I give all my brass to my dear wife," writes the trembling clerk. Signed by the testator in the presence, etc., etc., etc. Testator dies, leaving two brass canisters and a fortune of £250,000. Who gets the fortune? I advise: point uncertain; briefs for all. "My lord, the question in this case is as to the effect of a gift of the testator's 'brass.'" Very nice.

"The state of a man's mind is just as much a fact as the state of his digestion," said the late Lord Bowen in a case whose name I do not remember. My state of mind! Well, it's a fact. What fact? Oh well, never mind.

2.30-4.0. Read the Law Reports.

4.0. Alfred brings in tea. Alfred is a good man, but of immense age and palaeocrystic cast of mind. He is undoubtedly a less efficient clerk than he was in 1898. An American clerk might do better for the chambers.

4.20-5.30. Cataleptic trance.

5.30. Get my hat and umbrella, say good night all round ("Good night Simons—Good night Parker—Good night Robert—Good night Brenchley—cheerio") and go home.

THE NEW TOWN

AS I was standing at the High Street corner,
Just beyond the flower shop next but one to Boot's,
I heard Dr. Kinnersley sitting in his roadster
Parked just opposite give three toots.

I waited for a motor-bike, a lorry from the brick works,
For Mr. Moss the milkman and his old horse Fred;
I dodged behind a Green Line picking up passengers
And got to Dr. Kinnersley; and this is what he said:

"Have you heard the latest? They're starting in on
Saturday

Demolishing the cottages east of Pucket's End.
They're bringing in a side road for prams and pedestrians
To join the new by-pass just beyond the bend."

"But surely," I answered, "they said at the Inquiry
They're going to put the post office down by Potten
Pool;

Then Hogswill Bottom will be the civic centre,
And the airport will cover the allotments and the
school."

"Well," said the doctor, "they told me at the showroom
(The chap with the white coat and too much hair)
That *that's* where they're putting the fun-fair and
aquarium,
And the gasworks are going in the old town square."

"No," said Mrs. Pickthorne, appearing at my elbow,
"The hospital's at Hogswill when they've filled it
up flat."

"But surely," I protested, "we've just built a hospital."
"Ah," said Mrs. Pickthorne, "they'd never think of
that."

"I'm sure you're wrong," I said, "because the square's
to be the sewage farm."

"That's right," said Mrs. P., "or so I've always
understood;

And the sewage farm is scheduled as a residential area
Connected with the workers' flats in Mr. Feltham's
wood."

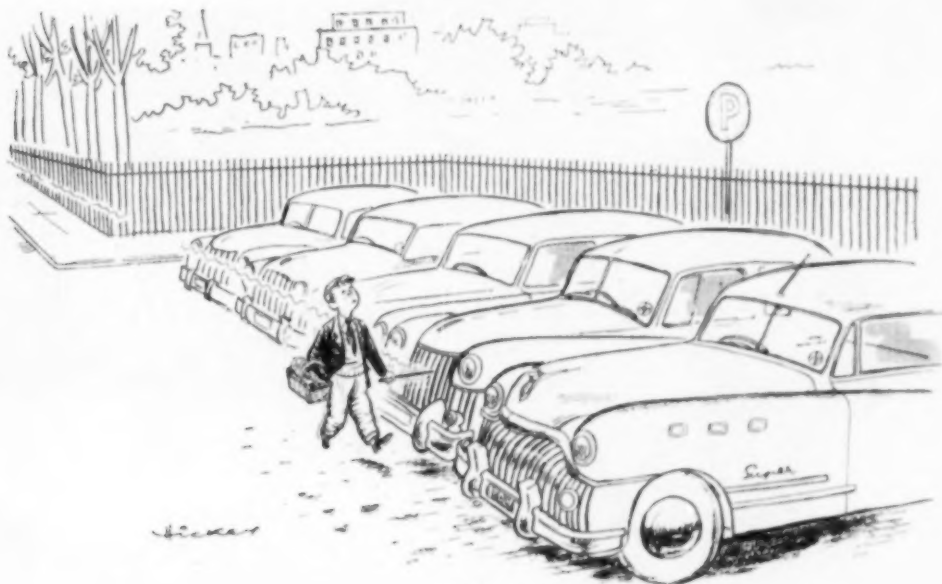
"Well," said the doctor, "if I *am* a Civil Servant,
I've work to do at hospital before they knock it flat."
And "Well," said Mrs. Pickthorne, getting on her
bicycle,
"I've got to keep the house clean until they come
for that."

And "Even if my home is in the middle of the by-pass,"
Said I, "I may as well go and live in it a bit,"
So we parted irresolute and passed with heads averted
The lovely Georgian mansion where the lordly
planners sit.

The old brick glowed from what is to be the sewage farm,
Beneath the future workers' flats the trees were
green and cool;

The birds sang in the apple-boughs about the civic
centre.

And I swore like a trooper from the square to Potten
Pool.



DEATH OF

THEY wanted the report by Friday:

He saw no one, took no calls,
And worked alone,
Clothing the skeleton with words
Graded and chosen,
Chiselling with thought a weapon
Ominous with power, compressed with action,
Sent it down, a purring missile
To the chairman; caught the train.

Watching the slums dissolve to fields,
He took the week apart,
Serviced his mind,
Picked over his performance,
Found it good that not yet old
He influenced such great affairs.
Soothed by the rhythm of the wheels,
Unloading concentration he relaxed,
Thought of old Roger on his Suffolk farm,
Looked forward to a week-end's vegetation.

They drilled for kale.
The blacksmith came to shoe the children's cob.
Ursula dropped a bullcalf, Charlie Hood
Took him on Sunday night for forty bob.
He sawed some wood.

They got a harrow at old Kindred's sale,
Two buckets and a useful strap,
And after met Tom Lardner in the Crown
And talked an hour or so of this and that



Ernest A. Shepard

EXECUTIVE

In case his price for Coppice had come down.
He caught a rat.

They swapped some oats for seed for chicken meal
And took a drink off Mayhew at Stag's Hill;
Then driving back spied shrewdly on the fields
Of neighbour farmers and assessed the skill,
The character of each which stood revealed.
He played with Jill.

They rode across the farm as evening fell,
Retold the storied saga of each field;
Debated long the working of the plan
For draining Loudham's Belt into the dell.
He groomed Hassan.

Watching the fields dissolve in slums
His mind assumed the habit of his work,
Reviewed some facts, rehearsed an interview,
Thought with distaste
Of dull things to be done
Left over from last week.

The office hummed with the report;
The chairman praised him to his face.
Strangely he found he could not care,
But suddenly felt bored, and longed for land
Where he could watch the seasons change,
And growing crops, slow-moving beasts,
And the pale sun going down behind
The blackened skyline trees
On Coppice Hill.





ANY QUESTIONS?

The Citizens' Advice Bureau

IT is often remarked by visiting wisecracks that in the matter of information we are a backward people. It is certainly true, and not merely a radio joke, that to ask the way in any town in England is inevitably to address someone either incapable of speech or just landed that morning from Pernambuco. Yet I am not aware of any other country in which provision has been made for answering any question, however complicated, however curious, that you may care to propound. You didn't know of this amazing service, that costs you nothing? Then follow me.

It is eleven o'clock in the morning in a small county town, now fully awake and shopping, and probably thinking of its cup of coffee. Our goal lies between the saddler and Mr. Grit the grocer. In its last incarnation it was a fish-shop, but the fumes of cod have given way to a brisk atmosphere of helpfulness. Over the front is a blue sign that says CITIZENS' ADVICE

BUREAU in nice friendly letters. We push the door and go in. The room is spartan, but bright posters hang round the walls and there is a pleasantly informal feeling. At separate tables sit a woman and a man, giving ear to two customers in full spate. We are waved cheerfully to chairs in a corner, where several others are before us. There is no disagreeable sensation of waiting on the headmaster, or even the bank-manager. The customer on the left is a weather-beaten cottager with three bulging shopping bags and the kind of personal drama that hinges mainly on "I ses to him, she ses to me." Hers is an ancient burden, trouble with the landlord. On the other side of the table the expert, who has heard the same story hundreds of times, listens quietly until at last, seizing a moment when the orator is seriously out of breath, she tells her exactly where she stands and counsels moderation. The old lady gets up, radiantly happy, collects her bits and pieces,

and departs. She has been allowed to let off steam. Someone who really knows is interested, and will act. The expert, by the way, is a voluntary worker, a married woman who gives up half her time because she is convinced she is doing a useful job.

Her next customer is a girl, evidently in graver trouble. "Well, it's family," she murmurs tearfully, and is led into the private room beyond. In the meantime the other expert (a retired judge) has told a youth how to get to Canada without stowing away, has made clear the ingenious conditions governing the surrender of bacon coupons by amateur pig-keepers, and has put through an effective telephone call about the lapsed pension of a worried ex-Serviceman. It is now your turn, and if you bowl him out the lunch is on me. . . .

You may well ask how so extraordinary an enterprise began. In September 1939 two hundred C.A.Bx. (I accept the official abbreviation, though I dislike it) were

opened to help Mr. and Mrs. Everyman through the new problems clouding the horizon. They were organized as flexibly as possible by that blessed octopus the National Council of Social Service, and they were such an instant success in removing some of the deeper wrinkles from the public brow that more followed quickly. They gave information which was found to be accurate, they gave, when asked for it, advice that proved sound, and although confidences were respected (that was naturally fundamental) they acted as extremely sensitive instruments of social research from which the Government could gauge the pressure of particular problems. Expectant mothers, to take an instance, owed their extra clothing coupons to representations by the C.A.Bx.

By 1945 over a thousand Bureaux were dealing with a constant stream of inquiry. It was then felt that, as transport improved and many wartime categories of question declined, fewer Bureaux would be needed, and now there are just over five hundred, spread right through Britain (Scotland and Ulster have their own), and ranging from quite large urban offices to single rooms in private houses in the depths of the country. Thirty per cent of their workers are paid, the other seventy are voluntary. Over two-thirds of the Bureaux are grant-aided by local authorities, who realize that here is an invaluable liaison service providing an outside link between the lengthening chains of State and municipal activities. Some authorities, with minds tidier than broad, have taken over the Bureaux in their districts, but many others (such as Westminster) continue to give financial support while leaving the Bureaux to run themselves, wisely believing that the public will have greater faith in a body known to be free of official control. Needless to say, the Bureaux are entirely non-political. All that are registered (above a minimum size, and conforming to certain conditions) are in the hands of a committee which draws its members from the local authority and other interested quarters. They are thus a

service run by citizens for citizens, catering for all classes, all ages and, you may say, all problems, for where a Bureau doesn't know the answer it does know where to find it, and quickly.

At the centre is the National Council of Social Service, bringing the Bureau workers together in conference, helping them (through travelling officers) and keeping them supplied with the latest information on current topics. The reliability of this is vital, and a special staff in London concentrates on it; frequent circulars go out to each Bureau, as well as an astonishingly comprehensive book called *Citizens' Advice Notes* that makes post-war legislation seem almost intelligible (you can get this for yourself from the N.C.S.S. at 26 Bedford Square, W.C.1, for two guineas, and for a further guinea a year loose-leaf supplements dispel the immediate fog).

But the traffic at the centre is two-way, for there all the inquiries from all over the country are classified, offering an exact picture, at which Ministries look with increasing respect, of what is worrying the harassed public most, and where. At present housing heads the list, and small wonder, for people are growing desperate about the squalor in which they are expected to go on existing. Local information comes next, and family problems, going up steadily, are third. The value to Whitehall of these returns that speak directly for the man in the street is incalculable.

Finally, of course, the whole service stands or falls on the character of the individual workers in the Bureaux. They have to be shrewd judges of human nature, and from my observation they are. They must be businesslike, particularly over records. Their local contacts must be friendly and cover all contingencies. And the art of interviewing is never easy. They must be patient with the longwinded, sympathetic to hardships, tolerant of official difficulties yet ready to cut their way through idle obstruction. Above all they must be capable of deciding when to confine themselves to information and when to add the advice that is needed more and more; and in this they must know their own limitations, recognizing at sight the cases to be referred to the panels of doctors, lawyers and other experts which are at the call of most Bureaux. To do any of these things well a sense of humour is essential. Workers declare that the tragicomic pageant of humanity that passes before their tables is far too enthralling to be missed.

In the wordy miasma of officialdom exuded by the Welfare State the Bureaux are a guiding beacon. They tell people what they want to know, and tell it tactfully and efficiently. Once the beautiful simplicity of their function is grasped it's hard to imagine how we ever did without them. There must be one not very far away from you. Take it a twister, and see.

ERIC KEOWNS





"I've got a feeling we're getting warmer."

A QUESTION OF SENIORITY

"**D**ROP everything, Dibdin," said Pinmill the other day, "and concentrate on this question of the *per capita* cost of providing cowls to council house chimneys. Assume 1:36 persons per chimney. The Building Materials (Restriction) Sub-committee have got an item down on the agenda for next Wednesday."

"Very good, Mr. Pinmill," said Dibdin, and went into the general office to look for Oxshott.

"Ah, Oxshott," he said, when he found him, "drop everything, will you, and concentrate on this question of the *per capita* cost of

providing cowls for council house chimneys."

"Very good, Mr. Dibdin," said Oxshott, watching anxiously out of the corner of his eye as young Lambswool rose quietly and moved towards the door.

"Don't lose any time," said Dibdin, going out. "The Building Materials (Restriction) Sub-committee are waiting for the answer."

"Ah, Lambswool," said Oxshott as the door closed behind Dibdin, "drop everything and . . . LAMBWOOL!"

But he was too late. Lambswool, whose deafness grows steadily worse,

slipped out a short head behind Dibdin. We heard him clattering downstairs, hot foot for the basement, where he plays a regular morning game of shove ha'penny with some members of the messenger service.

Muttering imprecations about modern youth Oxshott looked around for another victim. Chopleigh in his corner was whistling a provocatively cheerful air, while Miss Beamish kept her head steadfastly lowered over her book. Even if Oxshott's romantic attachment for Miss Beamish had not made him unwilling to swing the cowls on to

her there is the point that she is currently engaged in reading *Madame Bovary* in the original, which obviously rules her out. In the ordinary way there is no more willing worker than Miss Beamish; I have seen her lay aside *Forever Amber* or the latest Priestley with scarcely a complaint in order to carry out some important duty such as making the tea or working out her annual leave entitlement. As she herself says, "The Council comes first." But she very reasonably feels that in undertaking so severely intellectual a task as Flaubert in his own tongue she is entitled to be left undisturbed; and the section, which is inclined to be boastful of her cultural prowess, is in full agreement. She says she is getting on very well with the book, though she hasn't got up to James Mason yet.

There remained, therefore, Chopleigh. Chopleigh and Oxshott hold the same rank, that of senior clerk, but Oxshott is two annual increments higher up the scale. The question of seniority between them is therefore one which occupies both their minds considerably but has not, so far, been resolved. Chopleigh holds firmly that they are equals; Oxshott, for his part, insists that he is, as it were, the senior, senior clerk, and that seniority with-in a grade carries with it, in certain circumstances, the right to issue instructions to those a notch or two below.

Something electric in the air told Chopleigh that Oxshott had decided to fight a test case. He stopped whistling and, pulling a column of figures towards him, braced himself to meet the challenge.

Oxshott considered. "Drop everything, Chopleigh" was obviously out of the question. He swallowed hard and said "Busy, Chopleigh, old man!"

"And three is sixteen," murmured Chopleigh, "and eight is twenty-six and twelve is forty. Carry two pounds—"

"Chopleigh!" said Oxshott, in tones still calm but no longer honeyed. "I said 'Are you busy!'"

"Sssh!" Chopleigh raised a warning finger and proceeded laboriously to finish his casting. "Now,"

he said at length, throwing down his pencil, "what is it?"

"Thank you," said Oxshott, acutely aware that *Madame Bovary* was no longer claiming any considerable part of Miss Beamish's attention. "Are you busy?"

"I am," said Chopleigh. "Why?"

"I'm afraid you'll have to drop what you're doing," said Oxshott, glad to get in an effective line.

Chopleigh picked up his pencil again with the air of a man having to do with a lunatic.

"Nine nines are eighty-three, eighty-three pence are—let me see—seven and ninepence. . . ."

"Look here, Chopleigh," said Oxshott, passionately anxious not to be the first to lose his self-control, "you know the Council's rules. . . ."

"Which one have you in mind?"

Oxshott changed his ground. The only regulation bearing on the subject is deplorably vague. "Its ordinary discipline. As the senior officer I am asking you to drop everything and concentrate on—"

"Quite," said Chopleigh. "I heard Dibdin telling you. Why don't you get on with it?"

"Mr. Dibdin naturally left me full discretion to detail someone else if my own duties kept me occupied."

Chopleigh's lip curled frightfully. "So you refuse?"

"Categorically," said Chopleigh.

"You care nothing that the Sub-committee wants this information for its next meeting?"

"Less than nothing."

"Then," said Oxshott, smothering a vain regret that the Rubicon did not offer return travel facilities, "I must put the facts before Mr. Dibdin."

"Do," said Chopleigh.

But at that moment Dibdin popped his head round the door.

"Oxshott," he said, "don't bother with that business of the crows. Mr. Pinnill finds that the Sub-committee took the item at its last meeting but one. He wants you to drop everything and concentrate on this matter of the provision of fire escapes to swimming pools. Chopleigh might give you a hand if he's not too busy."

"Certainly, Mr. Dibdin," said Chopleigh.

BEFORE LETHE

GHOSTS of all I have loved
burn dimly in my brain
when I am no longer moved
by delight or pain.

Upon my tongue's thin reed
let there be placed
the unfleshed pomegranate-seed
that once was taste.

In the two hollow shells
by no laurels bound
be sullen, underwater far sea-swells
that once were sound.

Remote as the once-gold bloom
that of Queen Nefertiti tries to tell
still in the bleached air of her rifled
tomb
haunt the skull's hollow, smell.

In the long night
under the sensed, unseen trans-
Lethan trees
a pulse—too vague a flutter to be
called sight:
anemones.

By the turn of the screw—
or less, or much—
as the thinnest blade of light is
measured through
the electron's eye, what I once
knew as touch.

So may I be unmoved
at last. Do not return
from life, O breathing, glowing
ghosts I loved,
to tell me that I burn.

R. C. SCRIVEN



AT THE PLAY

The Cocktail Party (NEW)*Julius Caesar*

(STRATFORD)



N OBODY likes a mystery," two of the characters in *The Cocktail Party* agree; and although the play has proved this untrue in New York, where its obscurities are inducing a high fever of esoteric speculation, I am afraid it is true of me, in a case where mystery seems to serve little purpose. Mr. T. S. ELIOT's philanthropic ringmaster in Harley Street, who rearranges the lives of two unhappy intermingled couples, what exactly is he? If a doctor with an active conscience, why does he have unspoken knowledge of his patients, drink solemn libations to their spiritual welfare, and dispatch them with such unprofessional farewells as "Go in peace, my daughter. Work out your salvation with diligence"? But, if a black-coated archangel, why does he profess the usual earthly limitations? Reading the text doesn't help to find the answer. In the theatre one can be mystified with excitement for a short time, but not for a whole evening.

The play is written on two levels and, for a purpose I cannot discern, Mr. ELIOT has left a gap in the bridge between them. From a rather trivial tangle of infidelity he soars into mysticism that appears concerned mainly with atonement and the loneliness of the individual soul. He takes a dreary view of marriage, urging, through his medical enigma, that the second-best is as much as we can expect. All this is done in a form of blank verse which certainly gives rhythm to the longer speeches, but which is in no sense poetry and which comes very oddly from exquisitely tailored creatures bent over martinis. I am all for verse in the theatre,

*The Cocktail Party*

Uplift

An Unidentifiable Guest—MR. REX HARRISON

*Julius Caesar*

Downfall

Brutus—MR. HARRY ANDREWS; Cassius—MR. JOHN GIELGUD; Caesar—MR. ANDREW CRUICKSHANK; Antonius—MR. ANTHONY QUAYLE

but I feel it should have emotion as well as rhythm, and not be geared to a laboratory examination of humanity in which the telephone seems to ring every five minutes. Mr. ELIOT expresses states of mind with remarkable precision, but to me the problems of ordinary people are better expressed in prose. I like this play much less than *Family Reunion*, but as most critics consider it a major event in the theatre you should certainly go to the New, where Mr. E. MARTIN BROWNE has produced faultlessly.

The most far-reaching change in the Edinburgh cast is the substitution of Mr. REX HARRISON for Mr. ALEC GUINNESS, as the Doctor. Mr. GUINNESS leaned to the supernatural; Mr. HARRISON, one feels, has his golf-clubs in the cupboard, which makes the ritual drinking and all the rest of it even stranger. From Miss CATHEEN NESBITT's

superb performance at Edinburgh as the schizophrenic matron, half gadabout and half probation officer, Miss GLADYS BOOT carries on entertainingly; Miss MARGARET LEIGHTON plays *Celia* (much the best character) beautifully, and Miss ALISON LEGGATT and Mr. IAN HUNTER sketch in a compromise marriage with sincerity.

At Stratford, *Julius Caesar* sensibly produced by a young man, Mr. MICHAEL LANGHAM, working with Mr. ANTHONY QUAYLE. Imagination. No furbelows. Good sets. A crowd scene that drowns *Marc Antony*, but leaves the audience in rags, as if fresh from the Bastille. A splendid *Cassius* from Mr. JOHN GIELGUD, and a *Brutus* of real distinction from Mr. HARRY ANDREWS.

Recommended

The newest plays are disappointing. But if you have not yet seen *Ring Round the Moon* at the Globe, Fry's adaptation of Anouilh (London's most interesting production), *The Heiress* at the Haymarket, or *The Beaux' Stratagem* at the Lyric, do not despair.

ERIC KEOWN

THE DEMAND BID

LIFE, it is said, resembles a game of cards. If this is so it seems odd that the painstaking methods of Mr. Culbertson and his rival systematizers, which aim at resolving the doubts and hazards confronting the average card player, have not been seriously applied to the problems of day-to-day existence.

Suppose, for example, that I am about to ask my employer for a rise. Here it is desirable that I should be able to forecast the result of my demand with some accuracy; for such a bid if made on purely speculative grounds is unlikely to advance beyond the approach stage. Let us see, then, how the matter may be determined.

A sound bid is naturally based on an adequate number of "quick tricks." These, in the case under review, would be represented by such salient factors as the following, with the relative values shown:

Defeat of our handits, single handed,	
by declarer	2
Defeat of our handits, guarded by	
office caretaker	1½
Extinguishing fire on premises,	
without mess	1½
Extinguishing fire on premises, with	
mess	1
Major order, booked by declarer ..	1
Minor order, from difficult client ..	½

These values are not absolute, but are founded on mean probabilities. A newly acquired fiancée, for instance, will "make" only if the opponent holds favourable views on matrimony. Therefore, except in the *grand marriage* with employer's daughter, she counts but half a trick. Again, due allowance must be made for any adverse holding, such as an exposed shortness in petty cash.

From the examples given, the opener should be able to select his most biddable suit. Next we consider:

Outside honours

Partnering employer's wife at	
tennis (add ½ for tournament	
win)	2
Teaching child to roller-skate ..	1½
Offer from rival firm, documented	1
Offer from rival firm, undocumented	
(finesse value)	½

A "shaded" bid will sometimes pay, particularly where the oppon-

ent has been rendered vulnerable by plus values at lunch. Bluff bids, however, based on a psychic knowledge of the employer's past, are apt to recoil on the head of declarer in the form of a complete shut-out.

A count of supporting tricks is now undertaken. These will consist of:

(a) Long suits

Years devoted to firm's interests,	
man and boy. Each decade ..	1
Memories of present chief's grand-	
father, guarded (Unguarded	
memories are usually worthless) ..	1
Dependent children. Each over	
three	½

Note.—It is inadvisable to call on mere length alone. Where additional values are required to justify a bid, recent overtime may be taken into account. If first mentioned by opponent this should be doubled.

(b) Short suits

Carrying on during epidemic, with	
singleton staff	2
Carrying on during epidemic, with	
doubleton staff	1
Grey hair contracted in service ..	½

(c) Voids

A void in hair is unfortunately of doubtful value. On the other hand, if top honours in fire-extinguishing are held *opposite a void in insurance* the full forcing value should at once be added. Such extra distributional counts may turn an otherwise shaky bid into a "lay-down." A jump raise to departmental head becomes a probability, while—provided the hand is correctly played—grand slam (a directorship) is by no means out of the question.





IMPRESSIONS OF PARLIAMENT



Monday, May 1st

In these days, when nearly everything seems to be reduced to initials, some M.P.s amuse themselves by inventing initial-titles for the present Parliament. One Government supporter calls it the "E.H.T.U." Parliament, and an Opposition Member the "N.A.D.M." Parliament. And if, as invariably happens, someone asks for a translation the first Member obliges with "Everything Happens To Us" and the second with "Never A Dull Moment."

Certainly both descriptions were justified to-day. The subject under debate was the superficially rather unexciting one of road haulage, and the Opposition, through the mouths of Mr. PETER THORSEY-CROFT, Lord DUNGLASS, Sir DAVID MAXWELL FYFE and others, complained with some bitterness that the Government was seeking to force out of business the few remaining private haulage firms which were competing with the Government-controlled industry.

There was no atmosphere of tension: Ministers sat quietly on the Treasury Bench as Sir DAVID wound up for his side in his usual moderate and restrained manner, and then at 9.22 P.M. he quietly mentioned that it was proposed to force a division. Mr. WILLIAM WHITELEY, the Government Chief Whip, leapt up and at once set his staff to work to muster his forces—it all had to be done before 10 P.M.

Mr. ALFRED BARNES, the Minister of Transport, replied to the debate and then, without fuss, the division was taken. The shouts of "Aye!" and "No!" seemed about equal—but then they frequently do.

Fifteen minutes later, with the Prime Minister, Mr. MORRISON and other Government leaders sitting in a worried row, and Mr. CHURCHILL, Mr. EDEN and other Opposition leaders sitting in an interested row opposite, the tellers walked in. The Second Clerk Assistant handed the

paper containing the result to Mr. ARTHUR PEARSON, the Government teller, and there was a yell of triumph from the Government backbenches, for this move normally means a Government win. The cheer ceased abruptly, and everybody craned to hear the figures. Mr. PEARSON swallowed hard and then read in a firm voice: "Ayes to the right, 278; Noes to the left, 278."

Before the House had had time even to gasp, the resourceful Major JAMES MILNER, Chairman of Ways and Means, was on his feet announcing that, in accordance with precedent, and in order to keep the matter open for further discussion,



Impressions of Parliamentarians

Lord Addison

he would vote "No"—which gave the Government a majority of one.

Mr. ATTLEE stroked the top of his head thoughtfully, Mr. MORRISON folded his arms, Mr. CHURCHILL drummed on his knees and Mr. EDEN ran his fingers through his hair. And that was all. But in those few minutes both the initial-titles had been amply justified, for it is only at intervals of a half century or so that the Chair has to give a casting vote.

Very close observers at Question-time might have foreseen that it was "one of those days," for a number of Ministers dropped verbal bricks, including (of all people) the nimble-witted Mr. DICK STOKES, Minister of Works. In these housing-conscious days, for instance, it was strange to hear from him: "I can assure the House that we never build if we can help it!" He did not mean

it that way—but it got a roaring cheer from the Opposition, a rueful, too-late laugh from the Minister.

A moment later Mr. STOKES dropped another clanger. Someone was talking about cement, and he replied innocently "Cement is not yet nationalized—in fact there was a record delivery last week!"

Then Mr. NOEL-BAKER, Fuel Minister, entered the putting-the-brick competition, choosing coal as the subject. Someone said nationalized coal was useful only as dirt and not as coal, to which the Minister replied that "it depended on what the public would buy." Mr. STOKES seemed a trifle envious of his colleague's share of applause from the Opposition.

Tuesday, May 2nd

The serenity of the House of Lords was shattered to-day when

House of Lords: Atmosphere of Censure
House of Commons: Cattle Grids

Lord STANSFORD and other Peers dealt with great severity with Lord VANSITTART because of comments he had made on named individuals in the course of a speech on Communism some time ago.

As a sort of curtain raiser an ancient Standing Order against "offensive speeches" was read out—for the first time since 1872. Then Lord STANSFORD went to it, alleging that Lord VANSITTART had abused his Parliamentary privilege.

Lord VANSITTART sat unhappily through all this, and through speeches on the same lines from the Bishop of BRADFORD (one of the named persons) and other noble critics. Looking embarrassed, Lord ADDISON, Leader of the House, tried conciliation, but Lord VANSITTART, complaining that he had been harshly dealt with, crumpled a copy of Lord STANSFORD's censure motion dramatically in his hand and let it flutter slowly to the floor. Soon afterwards the Lord Chancellor tactfully intervened, suggesting that the whole thing be dropped, everyone having



"There's one thing I really do appreciate about slaves—they take all the drudgery out of housekeeping."

had his say. Almost eagerly the House adopted this suggestion—with Lord STANSFORD uttering a lone "Not Content!" of protest.

Opposition M.P.s found a source of secret (well, fairly secret) mirth in the discussion in the Commons. It was on the provision of cattle grids, which are devices to prevent the straying of cattle. The Government Chief Whip did not appear to appreciate very much various *sotto voce* references to the straying that had produced last night's little adventure—however, the Bill got its Second Reading, so cattle grids may appear in our countryside soon.

Wednesday, May 3rd

A Bill was passed to appoint four more High Court Judges and several to the County Courts, while their Lordships discussed the under-recruitment of the police

forces. Sir HARTLEY SHAWCROSS, the Attorney-General, gave the Commons some comfort by assuring them that the need for more judges was due to an increase in the population rather than to an increase in crime or litigiousness. But in the Lords it was admitted that there has been an increase in crime, perhaps due in part to a shortage of police.

The Lord Chancellor freely confessed that the chief reason for the shortage of police was a shortage of accommodation for them. Local authorities, he said, had badly let down the Home Office by failing to provide enough houses.

Lord Trenchard, a former Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, did not carry to a vote his motion complaining of the shortage of police. The Government had an easy passage, too, in the Commons, and the Bill was passed without a division, although many speakers

pointed out that High Court Judges' salaries—fixed a century ago—were not in line with modern standards.

Thursday, May 4th

Mr. ANEIRIN BEVAN announced (without flourish) that he intended to allow local authorities to license one privately built house, for sale, for every four built by the authorities. This had been the ratio until last autumn, when it was cut to one in ten.

The announcement was warmly received by the Opposition; rather frigidly by the Government side.

Prize of the week went to Mr. HENRY STRAUSS, who asked which advertising agency had announced in the United States that "The food you receive on British Railways will astonish you!"

There was no reply from the Government.

House of Lords and
House of Commons:
Arms of the Law

House of Commons:
Private Builders



"Victoria Station—hell for leather!"

THE UNKNOWN

"AUNT JUDY rang up while you were out," said Edith, "and asked if we could put her up for the night. Of course I said that we would be delighted."

I have a good memory for most things, but not for aunts, and Edith has a large and varied assortment of them. I could not remember which was Aunt Judy, and decided to play for time.

"It is lucky," I said, "that I remembered to cure the waste-pipe in the spare bedroom of gurgling. It kept the last aunt we had here awake." I hoped that Edith's next remark would give a clue to Aunt Judy's identity. If she had said, for

instance, that she hoped Aunt Judy's leg was better, I should have known that Aunt Judy was the rheumatic one with the faintly equine face, from Lincoln. Or some other clue might have identified her with the long thin one with the ear-splitting laugh, from Devizes, or the one whose husband used to drink such a lot, from Worcester.

Instead of giving me a clue, however, she merely said that Aunt Judy's train was due in at four-forteen, and that of course I must meet it.

"Wouldn't it look better," I suggested, "if we both met it? Aunt Judy, if I remember rightly, is

rather inclined to take offence at any sort of neglect."

This was pretty safe, because most of Edith's aunts are like that. It is a family characteristic. And unless Edith came with me to the station I might quite easily collect somebody else's aunt instead of her Aunt Judy, which would lead to complications.

I tried, as we walked to the station, to chat about Aunt Judy, still hoping that Edith might let fall a clue, but she seemed rather to avoid the subject. Could Aunt Judy, I wondered, be the black sheep of the family? I became more and more certain that I had never met her or heard her mentioned before, which would be natural if Aunt Judy were the sort of aunt that a self-respecting family likes to hush up.

The train came in, and a thin trickle of people moved towards the barrier. Only one of them, a pleasant-looking old lady with a heavy bag, could possibly be anybody's aunt, so I marched forward, took her bag and kissed her warmly on the forehead. Edith always expects me to kiss her aunts.

As soon as I had finished my kiss Edith also kissed her and said:

"Aunt Judy! I'm so glad you caught the train, and I hope you had a pleasant journey."

Aunt Judy seemed puzzled.

"It is very kind of you to meet me," she said, "but who are you? And where are Mildred and Basil?"

It took a good deal of sorting out, but we cleared it up in the end. Aunt Judy did not belong to us at all, but to the Johnson-Clitheroes of Laurel Lodge. She had rung up Munton Parva 221 and they had given her Munton Parva 211, and when she said she was Aunt Judy Edith had thought she must be one of my aunts.

"You have such vast quantities of aunts," as she told me after we had delivered Aunt Judy at Laurel Lodge, "and you are always so annoyed when I can't remember which is which that I didn't like to admit that I couldn't place Aunt Judy, and waited for you to give me a clue to her identity."

D. H. BARRER

BOOKING OFFICE

Hannibal in Shorts

OUR depression at the thought that hussars are doomed to inhabit metal boxes lightens a little when we read the astonishing story of how much our troops in Burma were in the debt of elephants.

These operated under an unconventional leader, Lt.-Col. J. H. Williams, who describes his adventures in *Elephant Bill*, the name by which he came to be gratefully known by harassed sappers. It is a robust and lively record that tells an exciting story modestly and well, with good maps; and all who stand in awe at the inscrutability of Dumbo will find it full of wonders. Between the two wars Colonel Williams lived in the Burmese jungle, looking after the elephants that hauled teak in the forests. The first half of his book is an account of the life and training of beasts so ingenious and lovable that, in spite of the malaria and loneliness and danger to which they brought him, his greatest regret is that early in his career he shot four of them.

The Bombay Burma Corporation kept nearly two thousand. Calves bred in captivity maintained the herd, and were more easily broken in than their cousins from the wild. Schoolmaster elephants, bored martinet, gave them their nursery lessons. For nineteen years, a longer period than most human beings can any longer afford, they were under instruction, at a cost of a thousand pounds a head; and from graduation until about fifty-five they dragged and pushed the huge trees at the orders of their devoted Burman "cozies," following as many as twenty-four words of command and displaying the precision of bulldozers.

Elephants' maternity arrangements are altogether magnificent. Expectant mothers are accompanied everywhere by a responsible matron, a chaperone against tigers, and during a birth the whole herd bellows to discourage intruders. Colonel Williams has all the answers, even to the romantic theory that old elephants withdraw to a mysterious graveyard at the approach of death. He says that in fact the ancients lag behind, settle by a pool, are too exhausted to leave when it dries up, and later are swept away by the rains. Children's writers, please note.

During the last war he acquired the enviable title of Elephant Adviser to the Fourteenth Army. His original methods were unpopular with desk-planners, who never succeeded in reducing his strange circus satisfactorily to paper, but generals in the field quickly learned its worth. In a foreword Field Marshal Sir William Slim declares: "They built hundreds of bridges for us, they helped to build and launch more ships for us than Helen ever did for Greece." The latter part of the book deals with many fantastic exploits, of which the most remarkable were the two gruelling treks with elephants led by the author out of Burma: the first, in 1942, took refugees to Manipur, the second moved precious animals to safety in Assam in 1944, by way of paths as lofty as those tackled by

Hannibal when he crossed the Little St. Bernard. Elephant Bill gives marks to Hannibal, but is convinced that his elephants were Indian, not African.

Another war book off the beaten track is Lt.-Colonel Gerald de Gaury's *Arabian Journey*. It would be more interesting if we were not kept largely in the dark as to the reasons for the four expeditions which he undertook during the war; but, as readers of his "Arabia Phoenix" will remember, his knowledge and understanding of desert peoples is rooted deep. Here the sketches of character, from Ibn Saud down to the humblest Bedouin, are straight from life, and both the magic and the miseries of Arabia are vividly seen.

More than other sportsmen, mountaineers appear to thrive on ancient controversies. (Fishermen, for instance, will often recount their own personal tragedy, but how seldom you come on two of them disputing across the Itchen the causes of MacWhirter's dreadful loss in 1877.) In *Postscript to Adventure*, a collection of leisurely essays, Lord Schuster delves into Alpine history with enthusiastic scholarship. His writing is pleasant, though not entirely free from the semi-religious attitude to high places that men not roped together find so odd.

ERIC KEOWN

Brief Encounters

When a woman who has loved or been loved by a famous man makes a book of her experience the record is too often vitiated by self-importance or self-pity. No such distortions mar *Chekhov in My Life*, in which one who was herself a writer of evident promise, though her talent came to be subordinated to domestic exigencies, tells the story of the relationship of frustrated affection which persisted through a decade of rare and rarely satisfying meetings between her and the man of genius whom she survived by nearly forty years. The candour, humility and illusionless humour of Lydia



Avilov's narrative proclaim a veracity on which the artistry of presentation and the precision of remembered dialogue can cast no doubt. Important as a contribution to Chekhov's biography, and to the understanding of his charming and capricious nature, this little book produces the effect both of poignant actuality and of some such pathetic fiction as Chekhov himself, or perhaps Turgenev, might have imagined. F. B.

Sarah Lennox's Sister

There are two ways of looking at the Irish Ascendancy of the eighteenth century. One is with what Mr. Brian FitzGerald calls the "stuffy Victorian" distaste evinced by Thackeray for its "ghastly pleasures," the pleasures that made "aristocracy" so irredeemable a byword. The other is Mr. FitzGerald's own light-hearted approach—the pre- and post-Victorian attitude of an agreeable rattle who is also an excellent editor. High spirits and scholarship have both done their best for *Lady Louisa Conolly*, a Lennox who married the grandson of a rich, plebeian, Hanoverian Speaker of the Irish Parliament. Louisa and her Thomas are a typical couple; and never more happily typical than in completing Castletown (the largest house in Ireland) and distributing meal to their indigent tenants. Thomas seems to have bored his contemporaries; and if the amiable Louisa does not bore ours it is only because her biographer has used her as a magnet for the assemblage of scraps of more precious metal.

H. P. E.



"Last night I dreamt that everybody had recognized me."

A Comedy of the Generations

With every new novel Mr. Henry Green adopts a fresh stance, and his insistence on making each book a different aspect of experience reflected in a different facet of his mind gives him the continuous originality lacked by those of his contemporaries whose peculiarity of vision becomes a tediously repeated trick. His new comedy, *Nothing*, is a complex study of conflict between the sexes and the generations. It is a terrifying and amusing story of the Bright Young People of the first post-war period, now physically decayed and using the force generated by their selfishness to crush the individuality of their children, those rigidly moral survivors of the second World War. Mr. Green's very individual style combines the exploratory subtlety of Henry James with the concentration of Miss Compton-Burnett. Here he is less shrouded than in some of his earlier work, and readers approaching him for the first time may find it the best place to start. R. G. G. P.

Fish Are Where You Find Them

In 1943 the U.S. authorities had the idea of increasing the food supplies of their forces in the Pacific by exploiting local resources of fish. The project succeeded too late to be of practical use; but it provided valuable information for the marine biologist, as well as furnishing its head, Dr. Wilbert McLeod Chapman, with material for a highly readable narrative aptly titled *Fishing in Troubled Waters*. Dr. Chapman cruised from April to September 1944 in a 70-foot Australian trawler among the Solomons in search of fish; and though the scene of the "Crystal Star's" operations was a little like the calm centre of a circular storm, and most of her daily risks such as are run by fishermen the world over, they provided an abundance of thrills and adventures with such things as sharks, crocodiles and giant clams. Last but not least Dr. Chapman learned to know and respect the Melanesian members of his ship's company, to whom he pays unstinted tribute.

C. F. S.

Books Reviewed Above

Elephant Bill. Lt.-Colonel J. H. Williams, O.B.E. (Rupert Hart-Davis, 18s.)

Arabian Journey. Lt.-Colonel Gerald de Gaury. (Harrap, 12s.)

Footprint to Adventure. Lord Schuster, O.C.B. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 15s.)

Chekhov in My Life. Lydia Avilov. Translated with an Introduction by David Magarshack. With drawings by Lynton Lamb. (John Lehmann, 10s.)

Lady Louisa Conolly, 1743-1821. An Anglo-Irish Biography. Brian FitzGerald. (Staples Press, 15s.)

Nothing. Henry Green. (Hogarth Press, 8s.)

Fishing in Troubled Waters. Wilbert McLeod Chapman. (Peter Davies, 10s.)

Other Recommended Books

No Man Purposes. Hugh Sykes Davies. (The Bodley Head, 9s.) Promising first novel about the underworld of London's deserters; "Third Man"-ish narrative, exciting and convincing, and a sensitive, balanced study of this important social problem.

No Duty on a Corps. Max Murray. (Michael Joseph, 8s.) Entertaining whodunit about a transatlantic voyage. Good shipboard detail, bright dialogue and characters, soothingly conventional emotions, reasonable solution.



"Think I'm an M.P. to come running every time the bell rings?"

MAN OF BUSINESS

AT any hour of the day or night, says the generous official message on our stove, we may telephone for help, of an electrical nature.

Help comes in the form of Howard; when I fell over the flex of father's bedside reading-lamp, plunging him, his influenza and the flat into total blackout, our usual rescuer arrived bearing a powerful searchlight which he trained on father in his bed.

Ignoring father's melodramatic pleas for mercy for a sick man Howard stared at him in the white glare, said he didn't like the sound of that chest, and recommended, at unnecessary length, an excellent cough mixture. He then picked up the broken flex and remarked: "That's where the trouble is. Fell over it, eh? Should of looked where you were going," and stepped backwards on to my foot.

Father is usually out when we fuse things.

"Who is that?" he asked restlessly when Howard had gone.

"We call him the man of business," I said. "Other people's," I added.

The first time I met Howard he came just as I was preparing lunch. Deftly he unscrewed the bottom of the electric kettle and found time to cast a perturbed eye at the sausages.

"You're not going to eat those things?" he inquired.

"Certainly," I replied sharply. "I didn't queue for them and carry them home just to put them in a still life." Howard tutted, was silent for a bit while exploring the kettle, and then said earnestly that he'd like to leave me a little vegetarian pamphlet he had. He left three, and came back to slip a fourth under the door a few minutes later.

Our man of business has a lean, long-nosed face; his rather popping eyes, much enlarged by thick glasses, beam with friendly interest as he pokes about the flat; I once found him in my bedroom looking

at my water-colours when he had come to mend the kitchen stove. Unabashed, he asked me if I sold many. He also informed me that the lady in number twenty had a new dress identical to the one I had just-brought home in triumph.

But I think Howard was at his most telling in the matter of our Siamese kitten. He arrived to do the hotplate a few minutes after the kitten was acquired.

"Nice little rat, aren't you, eh?" he kept saying, lowering his large face to peer into the kitten's small, squinty one. "Real blue eyes," he remarked happily, "and long brown gloves on—I tell you, she's the living image of that French lady in number eight."

After twenty minutes of this I gently reminded Howard about the hotplate, which he mended very casually with three-quarters of his attention on the kitten; with the result that I had to send for him again two days later. This time, though, I was rather touched; he

brought a tiny red collar and bell, and presented it. The repair-work took an hour.

But, alas, on Howard's next visit he met no kitten.

"Where is she?" he asked anxiously, looking behind doors.

"Lost," I said sadly. "Or stolen." Howard worked quickly in a shocked silence, and left abruptly.

We had another unhappy week of futile advertising and searching; the flat seemed awfully silent and tidy without the living image of the French lady in number eight.

Then one night just as I was getting dinner the front door bell rang fiercely. I answered it with half my mind on the gravy. In popped Howard.

"But—nothing's fused!" I said.

Howard, cap still on, and jaw set, thrust his way into the kitchen, cleared a space on the draining-board and set down his tool-bag. Unclipping it, he triumphantly brought out our kitten—blinking, collarless and two weeks bigger, but unharmed.

"Don't ask me where," was all Howard would say. When pressed for details he added righteously "Thought they'd get away with it—but they shouldn't of left her collar where I could see it."

"And where was that?"

"Under some handkerchiefs in the dressing-table drawer."

STOREHOUSE

INTO the mind's twilight, between sleeping and waking,

Thoughts fall leaf-light, light as a cobweb spun
In summer air; thoughts like bubbles, making
Brief rainbow-baubles, that mirror the bright sun.

There is a moment when the mind flowers, when reason
Is laid aside, even between breath and breath;
This is release, this is the lovely season
Of dreams; when night blooms, and reality 's a wraith.

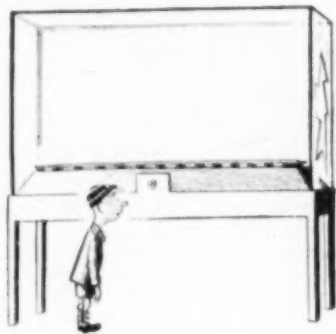
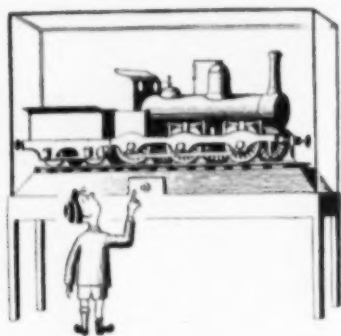
It is then that we wander again in well-loved places,
Our hearts' homes; or follow in fancy childhood's
ways
Through field and lane, familiar as friendly faces,
Warmed by the suns of long-lost summer days.

And at this time, unfolding all our fancies,
Fondly once more we walk the remembered wood
Where still the nightingale enchants the senses
And ravishes with his voice the solitude.

Far the mind ranges between waking and sleeping,
When night has come and stress is laid aside;
Clothed in fair flesh, what tenuous dreams come
leaping
Out of the dusk, and will not be denied!

Dreams that cannot be wholly banished after;
Hidden daylong, but housed in us, sealed,
We carry the song-filled wood and the echo of laughter
In us for ever, even to the rim of the world.

M. E. R.



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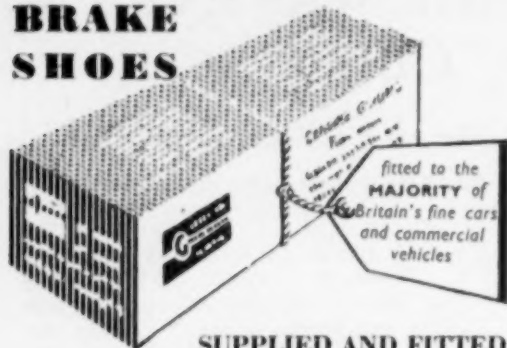
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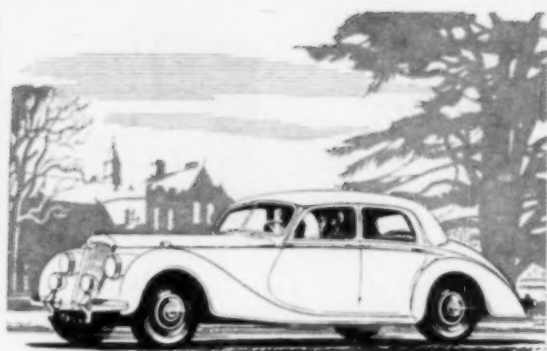
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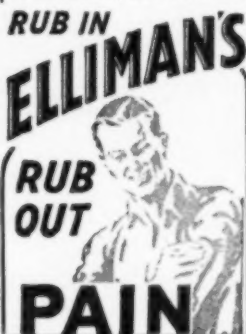
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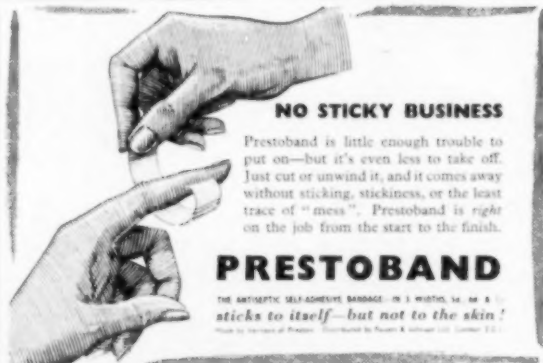
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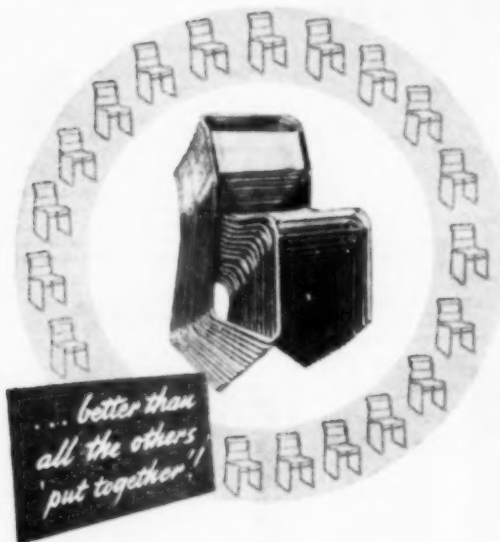
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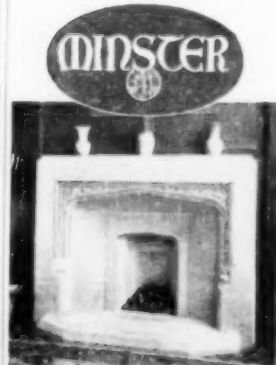
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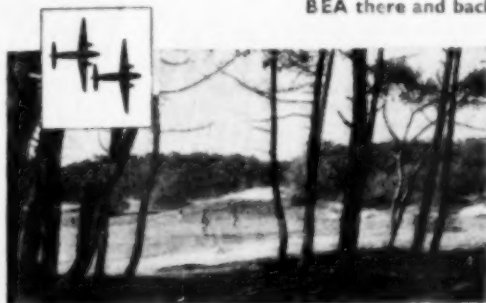
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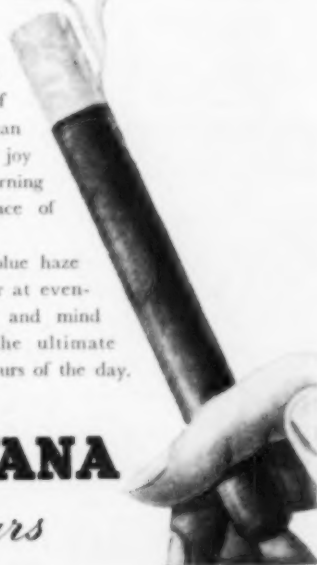
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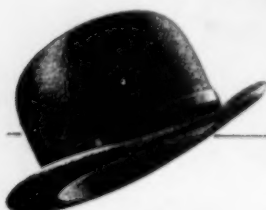
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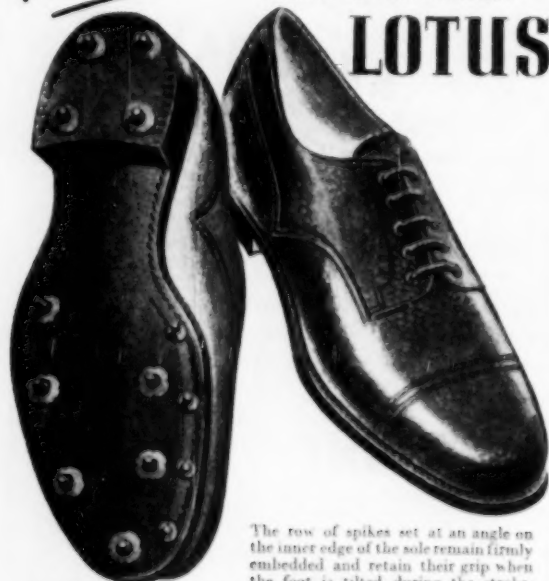


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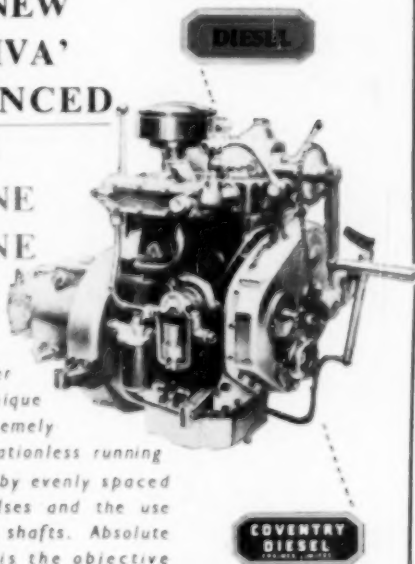
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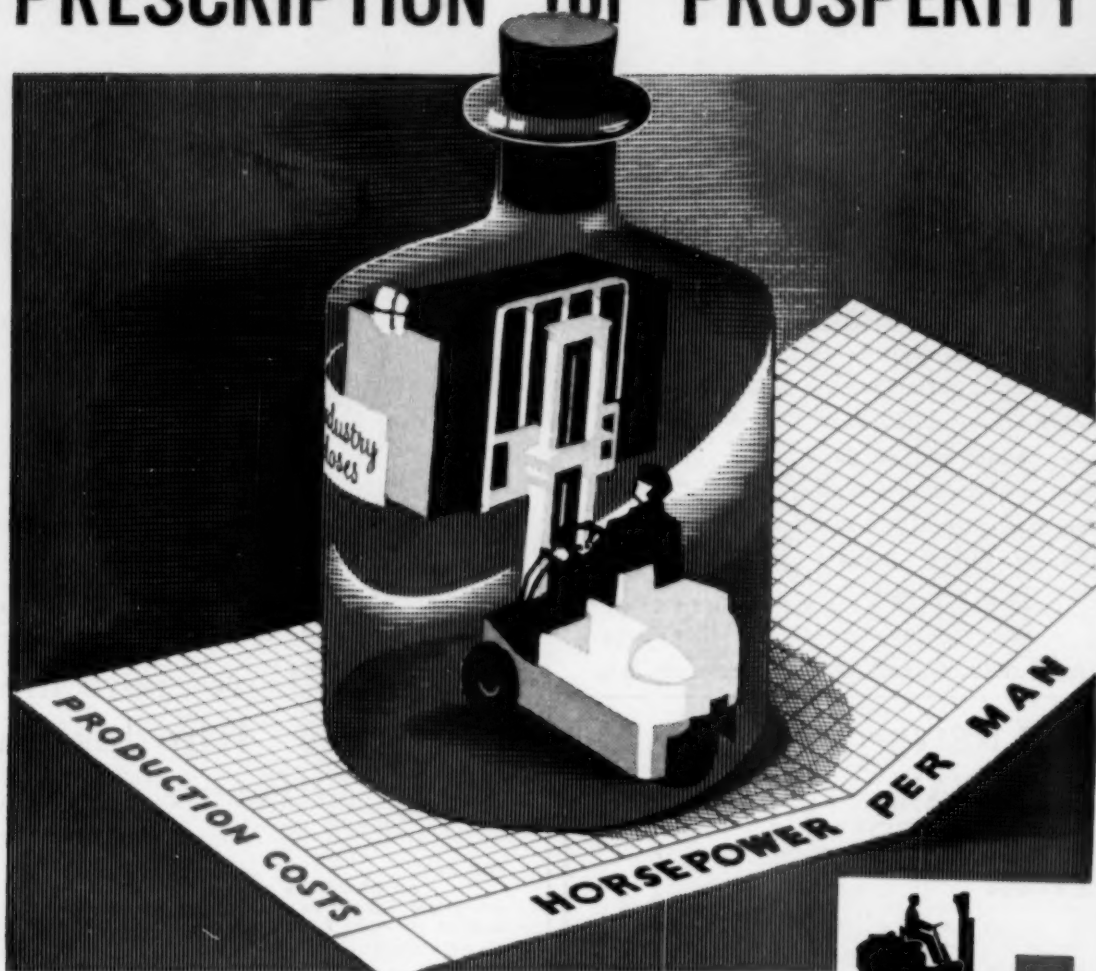
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